MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

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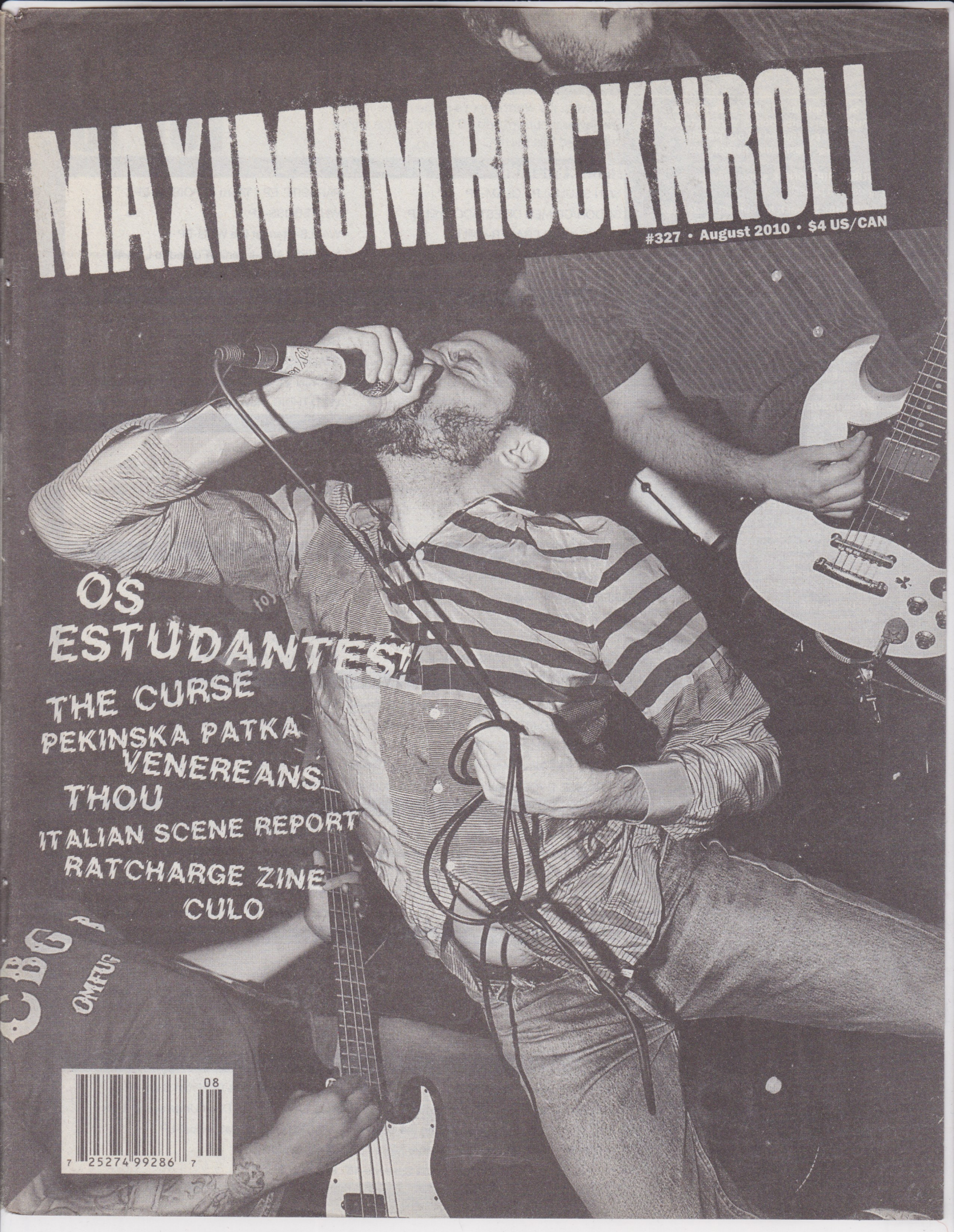

OS ESTUDANTES

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ITALIAN SCENE REPORT

RATCHARGE ZINE

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MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

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BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE:
179-181, 186-191, 195, 197, 202, 203, 206, 208, 209, 214, 218, 221, 223, 225, 227, 229, 230, 233, 234, 236, 238-247, 249-251, 253-306, 308-320, 322-326

See page 4 for pricing and other info.

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TOP 10

For what it's worth, here's some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

MARIAM BASTANI

- SON SKULL-LP / GLAM-EP
- SUDOR/CRIMEN DE ESTADO-split LP
- SLANG/MIND ERASER-split EP
- VIPER-Committing the Seven Deadly Sins-EP
- NÜ SENSAE-TV, Death and the Devil-LP
- PARASITE-EP / TALKI IS POISON-EP
- WHITEBOSS-LP
- WALLS-Stare at the Walls-EP
- NERVESKADE-Insanity/Forced to Live-45
- PERDITION-Room 101-EP

BRACE BELDEN

- CHOSEN FEW-Jokes On Us-EP
- ELECTRIC DEADS-Anti Sex-EP
- MIKE REP AND THE QUOTAS-Stupor Hiatus-2xLP
- APACHE-Radical Sabbatical-LP
- VIPER-Committing the Seven Deadly Sins-EP
- ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS-I Sell Soul-45
- GLAM-Duelo De Titanes-EP
- STALIN-Sakhalin Smile-LP
- FUCKIN' FLYIN' A-HEADS-Swiss Cheese Back-45
- WILD THING-(Now I Wanna Die in a) Nuclear War-EP

TIM BROOKS

WATCHING THE FOOTIE

ROBERT COLLINS

- SIN ORDEN / THE HUMANS-live
- NERVESKADE-live
- TALK IS POISON-live
- CROW / SLANG-live
- BASTARD NOISE / MORPHEME-live
- ANIMALITOS / ARCTIC FLOWERS-live
- SALTED CITY / SUBHUMANS-live
- NO MANS SLAVE / CROSS STITCHED EYES-live
- CRIATURAS / WALLS-live
- ACEPHALIX / MATA MATA-live

SEAN "DOUGIE" DOUGAN

- POTENTIAL JOHNS-Can I Really Not Go With You-45
- THE MARKED MEN-On/The Other Side-45
- SAUNA YOUTH-Youth-EP
- WILD THING-(Now I Wanna Die in a) Nuclear War-EP
- TERRIBLE TWOS-Keep It Grey/Catch A Cold-45
- TALK IS POISON-Rage To Infinity-EP / live in Austin
- DILLINGER FOUR-The Bootleg-LP
- ROOFIE AND THE NIGHTSTALKER-G.H.B-45
- LAMPS-The Role Of the Dogcatcher-45
- EVERYTHING FALLS APART-Ghost-45

LAYLA GIBBON

- NÜ SENSAE-TV, Death and the Devil-LP
- FUCKIN' FLYIN' A-HEADS-Swiss Cheese Back-45
- GLAM-Duelo De Titanes-EP
- WETDOG-Frauhaus-LP
- NEON BLUD-Whipps-EP
- SUDOR/CRIMEN DE ESTADO-split LP
- SON SKULL-Birth Scene/Rewind-LP
- ELECTRIC DEADS-All
- GUN OUTFIT-LP / WHITEBOSS-LP
- LA LA VASQUEZ-EP / MAYDAY!-Illegal Alien-EP

BOB GOLDIE

VACATION ALL HE EVER WANTED / VACATION HAD TO GET AWAY

KENNY KAOS

- REAL NUMBERS-Real #S-LP
- JOHNNY WOLGA-Punk Sessions-EP
- ALICJA POP-Shining Apple/Walking the Cow-45
- TEENAGE KICKS-Electric Girl/Another Night-45
- YOUNG GOVERNOR-Cindy's Gonna Save Me-45
- BRAIN EATERS-The Girl From S.I.N-EP
- THE RATS OF NY-I Don't Undersyand It-45
- APACHE-Radical Sabbatical-LP
- DAVILA 666-12"
- ENERGY-First-LP

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TOP 10

Please send two copies of vinyl, CD-only, or demo releases to the address on the previous page

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- THE CHICKENS-Chicken Shit-LP
- WILD THING-(Now I Wanna Die in a) Nuclear War-EP
- THE BAT/ATOMTIC SUPLEX-split EP
- ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS-I Sell Soul-45
- DAVILA 666-12" / SAVAGE PINKOS-Novices-EP
- NERVESKADE-Insanity/Forced to Live-45
- WETDOG-Frauhaus-LP
- MIKE REP AND THE QUOTAS-Stupor Hiatus-2xLP
- STALIN-Sakhalin Smile-LP
- *Exit Through the Gift Shop*-film

RAY LUJAN

- LOUIS LINGG AND THE BOMBS-Hate Your Laws-EP
- JOHNNY WOLGA-Punk Sessions EP
- YOUNG GOVERNER-Cindy's Gonna Save Me-45
- ROOFIE AND THE NIGHTSTALKER-G.H.B-EP
- FEAR OF LIPSTICK-LP
- CYANIDE PILLS-CD / DOA-Talk Minus Action-LP
- BETTY AND THE WEREWOLVES-Teatime Favorites-CD
- MAKER-I-91-CD EP / MAYDAY!-Illegal Alien-EP
- LEMON DOTS-EP / TEENAGE KICKS-Uptight-LP
- BUZZCOCKS-live / STIFF LITTLE FINGERS-live

MARK MURRMANN

HOME IS WHERE THE FLOOR IS

BRUCE ROEHRS

"Everywhere working class men and women continue their struggle..."
RIP Bruce Roehrs 1950-2010

KEN SANDERSON

- TALK IS POISON-EP / WALLS-EP
- NERVESKADE-EP / PERDITION-EP
- CAPITALIST CASUALTIES / LACK OF INTEREST-split EP
- MIND ERASER/SLANG-split EP / GLAM-EP
- ADA-Max-CD
- ANTI-YOU-LP / LAHAR/STOLEN LIVES-split LP
- MASAKARI-The Profit Feeds-LP / RIPOSTA-LP
- THE ERGS-Thrash Compactor-EP / PARASITE-EP
- SUDOR/CRIMEN DE ESTADO-split LP
- CHAOS IN TEJAS-indeed, live

FRED SCHRUNK

- TWAT SAUCE-live
- KICKTEASE-live
- STREET LEGAL-live
- KEEP AWAYS-live
- FROZEN TEENS-live
- MAX LEVINE ENSEMBLE-live
- RAG RAGE-live / DELAY-live
- PROLES-live / MUHAMMAD ALI-live
- THE OVENS (Chicago)-live
- DEAD LIGHTS-Live

MARTIN SORRONDEGUY

TOO BUSY DIGGING THROUGH THE 7" BINS AT AMOEBA

ZINE TOP TEN

- *Henry and Glen Forever*
- *Distort #28*
- *Ride the Snake #3*
- *Modern Hate Vibe #4*
- *Seven Inches to Freedom #8*
- *Middle Finger Response #2*
- *So Nails #4*
- *Veggie Dog Saturn #4*
- *Chainbreaker #5*
- *Don't Tread On Me #40*

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A WHOLE CRAPLOAD OF MRR BACK ISSUES...

#179/April '98. Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyfs, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

#180/May '98. Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

#181/June '98. Grapefruit, Druggies, DDI, Bonecrusher, Normals, All Bets Off, Stiletto Boys, Summerjack, Cell Block 5.

#186/Nov '98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#187/Dec '98. Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, 3rd Party, No Class.

#188/Jan '99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/Feb '99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/Mar '99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April '99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#195/Aug '99. Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres.

#197/Oct '99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

#208/Sept '00. Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City, Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

#209/Oct '00. Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

#214/Mar '01. Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

#218/July '01. Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

#221/Oct '01. The G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B'67.

#223/Dec '01. "US Policy in the Middle East," "Revisiting 1948," Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Bluebloods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg. 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

#225/Feb '02. Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86'd, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

#227/Apr '02. Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

#229/June '02. Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

#230/July '02. Bitchin', Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

#233/Oct '02. "All Ages" article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon's Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

#234/Nov '02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead.

#236/Jan '03. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, *Arteore*, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

#238/Mar '03. World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilently Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

#239/Apr '03. Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

#240/May '03. I Quit, Apers, Headless Horsemen, Lesser of Two, Barse, Nightmare, Music Zine Roundtable, Exploding Hearts, Flesh Packs, Blacklist Brigade.

#241/June '03. Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

#242/July '03. Pensacola & San Francisco punk protest reports, John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, *Snakepit* zine, Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

#243/Aug '03. "Media Alliance and the FCC," Striking Distance, Malcontents, Invisible City, Books Lie, Charm City Art Space, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, I Shot Cyrus, Sunday Morning Einsteins, What the Kids Want, Onion Flavored Rings.

#244/Sept '03. None More Black, Deadline, Rai Ko Ris, Boxed In, Exploding Hearts, Raving Mojos, Blackout Terror, Morticia's Lovers, Thee Fine Lines, *Trust* zine.

#245/Oct '03. No Time Left, Riistetyt, Intense Youth, The Gimmics, Ass End Offend, Artimus Pyle, La Fraction, Kung Fu Rick, The Horror.

#246/Nov '03. Punk & Resistance in Israel, Letters from Palestine, No Choice, FM Knives, Bury the Living, Marked Men, The Dirty Burds, Provoked.

#247/Dec '03. DSB, The Boils, Popular Shapes, Phoenix Foundation, Bathtub Shitter, Meet the Virus, Cropknox, "Punk Babies on Tour" Article.

#249/Feb '04. From Ashes Rise, Hagar the Womb, This Is My Fist, Skip Jensen, Gride, Katy Otto/Mike Taylor Dialogue, John Yates, Pointing Finger.

#250/Mar '04. Best Records of 2003, Miami FTAA protests, Clorox Girls, FIYA, "La Villita: Chicago Pilsen Scene," Terminus Victor, Restarts, Damage Done, Knights of New Crusade.

#251/April '04. The Fuse!, Väkivaltaa, Modern Machines, Microcosm, Migra Violenta Euro tour diary, Allegiance, Neurotic Swingers, Xavier Lepaige Photos, Le Scrawl, Vrah.

#253/June '04. Sweet J.A.P., Gorilla Angreb, Vöetsek, Minority Blues Band, Scruvy Dogs, Molotov Cocktail, Kidnappers, Schifosi, King Ly Chee, YDI.

#254/July '04. No Hope For The Kids, Dropdead, Diskords, Breakfast, Asschapel, I Excuse, Strung Up, To Hell & Back, Four Eyes, Lamant, Gammits MW, scene reports from Portland, Boston and Germany.

#255/Aug '04. "Punk's Not Dead, Reagan Is" Special Issue, Leatherface, Get It Away, The Hatepinks, Keen Monkey Work, New York City, South Dakota, Czech Republic, Philippines, Russia.

#256/Sep '04. Observers, Witchhunt, Annihilation Time, Zann, Eskapo, FxPxO, Haymarket Riot, Fourth Rotor, Les Georges Lenigrad, Texas scene, Newfoundland, Indiana, England.

#257/Oct '04 The Election Issue, Jesse Townley, Matt Gonzalez, Rattus, Fighting Dogs, Hero Dishonest, Kickz, Boss Martians, Reactionary 3, Slovakia, Australia, South Wales, South East Asia.

#258/Nov '04. Career Suicide, Cathy Wilkerson of the Weather Underground, No Fucker, The Repos, Dominatrix, Ashtray, Deadstop, Midnight Creeps, Michale Graves, The Diffs, Shemps, Abi Yo Yo's.

#259/Dec '04. Bad Business, Penelope Houston, Rambo, AI, Ass, I Attack, The Krunchies, A-Lines, Insurgence Records, The Hates, Accidents, Massgrav, The Critics, Merciless Game, SF Hotel Workers Strike, photos from Japan, SoCal & the Bay Area.

#260/Jan '05. Technocracy, The Total End, Only Crime, True North, Partisans, For The Worst, Dick Spikie, Straight to Hell, Black Cross, Action, Ergs, Rusty Nails, Queer Activism in London, Greg Shaw tribute, John Peel tribute, Andrew "Stig" Sewell tribute, Beijing punk photos.

#261/Feb '05. Year End Top Tens, Riistetyt, Lost Cherrees, Complete Control, Cheap Sex, Gasoline Please, Beerzone, Greyskull, MOTO, Water Into Beer Fanzine, Swe-Punk scumpit, Japan punk photos, Bay Area punk photos, Texas, Russia, and Malaysia scene reports.

#262/March '05. Kärnvapen Attack, Neo Boys, Catholic Boys, Dead Moon, Wreckage, Frantix, Armitage Shanks, Wendy Kroys, To What End?, Cell Block 5, Bent Outta Shape, Ah-Nah Tron, Slovakia, Indonesia, and Illinois scenes.

#263/April '05. All Crusties Spending Loud Night 2004, Bombcnalarm, Battleship, APA, The Black Lips, Words That Burn, Flamingo 50, The Low Budgets, Mellakka, I Object, Antisect, Bay Area scene report, South Coast UK scene report.

#264/May '05. Crime, Love Songs, Bruce Banner, Intent, The Holy Mountain, Have Heart, The Bill Bondsmen, The Real Losers, archive photos, Bay Area scene photos, Taiwan and Rochester scene reports.

#265/June '05. Endless Nightmare, Hard Skin, Kolokol, Amebix, Transistor Transistor, The Safes, The Detonators, Finland scene report, France scene report, SoCal scene report.

#266/July '05. The Carbonas, MDC, Destrux, Unkind, Hiretsukan, Giant Haystacks, Ohuzaru, Teenage Harlets, Michigan scene report, San Diego scene report, Eugene, OR scene report, photos.

#267/August '05. Knugen Faller, Sleeper Cell, Motorama, Gulcher Records history, Army of Jesus, The Slicks, Thee Merry Widows, Rotten Sound, The Faction (UK), Czech and New Zealand scene reports.

#268/September'05. Signal Lost, Gulcher Records history part two, Teenage Bottlerocket, Mattilda (aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore), The Spectacle, Bang Sugar Bang, Chumbawamba, Reason of Insanity, Forward To Death, Flyer art, Florida Scene Report, Bay Area scene report, photos.

#269/October '05. Hammer, Desastre, Human Eye, Les Bellas, Gasmask Terror, Randy "Biscuit" Turner tribute, Stalag 17 (UK), Stepbrothers, Retching Red, Weaving the Deathbag, Gather, Chicago and SoCal scene reports.

#270/November '05. Clorox Girls European Tour, Czolgosz, Regulations, Time Flys, Taxi, No More Lies, Oil!, Paddy Costello of the Dillinger Four, Smartpils, Revenge of Mongoloid, Pisschrist, Scene reports: Puerto Rico, UK, Russia.

#271/December '05. Besthöven, Abductee SD, Tractor Sex Fatality, George Harrison, Deathtoll, Photos by icki, Ice & The Iced, the Ulcers, Chimps Eat Bananas, Deranged / Criminal IQ / Kick'n'Punch Records, Scene reports: Iowa, Maine, Illinois.

#272/January '06. Conga Fury, Let's Grow, Frustration, Bastardass, Icons of Filth, Burial, Hrydjuverk, Cranked Up!, Urrke T & the Midlife Crisis, Tropezio, *Baboon of Sickness* zine, Scene reports: Austin, France, Michigan, Larry Wolfley photos.

#273/February '06. Fuses, Endstand, Out Cold, Pedestrians, Acts of Sedition, BadEatingHabits, Western Addiction, Jesus Fucking Christ, Toxic Waste, Punk photo spread, St. Louis, USA & Brighton, UK scene reports.

#274/March '06. Best of 2005, Formaldehyde Junkies, Brutal Knights, Kansan Uutiset, Hatred Surge, A-Heads, Manikin, Upinatem, Hips, Boston scene report, Punk photo spread.

#275/April '06. History of ABC No Rio (Part One), Ringers, Missbrukarna, '90s garage punk scumpit, Anatomi-71, After the Bombs, Rubella Ballet, RIP Pig Champion, Ricky Adam interview and photographs, Sean McGhee, Hard Skin US tour diary.

#276/May '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part One), History of ABC No Rio (Part Two), Vitamin X Asian Pacific tour diary, Soviet Valves Suburban Death Machine, Frustrations, George Hurchalla, Scene reports: Czech Republic and Greece.

#277/June '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part Two), Imperial Leather, Boom Boom Kid, Vitamin X Asian Pacific Tour (part two), "How to Make It Big!" by the Phantom Surfers, Magrudergrind, Poland.

#278/July '06. Billy Childish, Death Token, The First Step, Ramsey Kanaan of AK Press, Headache City, Deconditioned, Under Pressure, Insuiciety, Instigators, Malaysia Scene, Bay Area Scene Pics.

#279/August '06. Mika Miko, The Fall, Cardiac Arrest, Digger & the Pussycats, Massmord, Insect Warfare, The Astronauts, Canary Islands Photo Spread, Four Slicks, The Fallout, PAWNS, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, & Umeå, Sweden scenes.

#280/September '06. Hjerte Stop, Grupo Sub-1, Desperate Bicycles, Bill Daniel interview and photo spread, APF Brigade, Disconvenience, Southkore Fest photo spread, Rosenbombs, Up the Voltage, Euro photo spread, Svartenbrandt, Asheville, NC & world wide punk scene reports.

#281/October '06. Out With a Bang, Redd Kross, Derek Lyn Plastic, We March, Alan Milman, Rat Traps, Blood Robots, The Scarred, Gilbert Switzer, Japan & US photo spreads, Sweden & UK scene reports.

#282/November '06. The Feelers, PESD, Toxic Ephex, Auktion, Bruise Violet, *Trust* fanzine, The Homosexuals, The Effigies, Rat City Riot, New York City & North Carolina scene reports.

#283/December '06. Jay Reatard interview & photos, Crimes Against Humanity Records, A Touch of Hysteria, Doris Fanzine, Kvoteringen, '90s Punk Scumpit Part II, Black Chrome, The Dirty Water Club, photos, Tokyo scene report.

#284/January '07. Margaret Thrasher, 924 Gilman at 20 Years, Order of the White Rose, Regress, Subhumans (UK) Part One, Blank Its, Condenada, Genetic Control, photos, Syracuse & San Diego scene reports.

#285/February '07. Randy "Biscuit" Turner of the Big Boys & the early Texas punk scene, Lemuria, Ruin, Subhumans (UK) Part Two, The Blinds, Tranzistors, ANS, Riot This, La Piovra, Bay Area scene pics, Barcelona, Spain scene report.

#286/March '07. Best of 2006, Smartut Kahol Lavan, Electric Kisses, Holy Shit!, Lost Cherrees Pt 1, Go!, Kraljevo, Serbia, and Bakersfield, CA scene reports.

#287/April '07. Alicja Trout, Keith Rosson (*Avow* zine), Crap Corps, The Vicious, Scum System Kill, Lost Cherrees Pt 2, Restless Youth, SBV, Australia, Kyiv, Ukraine, and Pittsburgh, PA scene reports.

#288/May '07. Clockcleaner, Pisschrist, The Rats (Sweden), Conflict (US), The Viletones, Violent Tumor, Czech Republic and East Texas scene reports.

#289/June '07. Ultimo Resorte, Kursk, Masstrauma, Social Circkle, Final Approach, Post Punk Kitchen, Southern Death Cult, Portland Drummers, Timisoara, Copenhagen, and Pampanga scene reports.

#290/July '07. Stormcrow, Merkit, Solid Decline, Monster Squad, Sex Vid, Vivisick, Warkrime, Top Ten, *We're Gonna Fight* zine, White Cross, Berlin scene report.

#291/August '07. *MRR* 25th Anniversary Issue. Martin Sprouse, Tim Yohannon, No Slogan, Ruidosa Inmundicia, Chinese Telephones, Vaseline Children, Anti-System, Dave Roche, 6-page retrospective photo-spread, Kawakami/Disclose obituary, Brazil scene report.

#292/September '07. New Bloods, Chronic Seizure, Outraged, Geriatric Unit, Active Distribution, Gruk, The Mods, No Defences, The Fakes, Trashies Tour Report, Mexico scene report.

#293/October '07. Punk and Immigration Theme issue w/ interviews, articles, and stories. Anti-You, Loser Life, Political Asylum, Olympia scene report.

#294/November '07. The Hipshakes, Neverending Party, Punk & Immigration article, Finally Punk, La Lucha Para La Justicia en Guatemala, Leftover Crack, AOA.

#295/December '07. Surrender, What If Gods Lie?, The Crawlers, 2:20, The Joneses, Libertario Magazine, Bad Samaritans, Shrapnel, Untermensch.

#296/January '08. Hellshock, Mario Panciera, Anathema, The System, Eddy Current Suppression Ring, The Voids, Cinecyde, Kykllooppien Sukupuutto, Punch In The Face, BSA.

#297/February '08. Marie Kanger-Born, Thrillhouse Records, Contaminators, Oi Polloi, Obstruction, I Walk the Line, Utopia

#298/March '08. Best of 2007, Autistic Youth, White Lung, Karma Sutra, Clusterfuck, Sharon Cheslow, Slaughter of the Innocent.

#299/April '08. Government Warning, Age, Off With Their Heads, Guided Cradle, Go It Alone, Fy Fan, Daily Void, Hungarian Scene history.

#300/May '08. NorCal Punk Special: Fix My Head, Black Rainbow, Tank Crimes, Young Offenders, Church Police, Traditional Fools, Six Weeks/Short Fast & Loud, Ecoli.

#301/June '08. Underground Railroad to Candyland, Straightjacket Nation, Red Dons, Spectres, Dean Dirg, Kola, Los Violadores, the Sears, Tentacles of Destruction, Antibodies, Head on Collision.

#302/July '08. Giuda, Wasted Time, Reality, Sin Orden, Teenage Head, Antidote, La Urss, Canadian Rifle, Seasick, Israel & Japan scenes.

#303/August '08. Double Negative, Burnt Cross, Masapunk, Chicago Clitfest, Intifada, Nuclear Death Terror, Raw Power, Unlovables, Waste, Chaos In Tejas photospread, Houston and Grand Rapids scene reports.

#304/September '08. Raymond Pettibon, John Stabb of Government Issue, Cola Freaks, Measure [sa], The Press, XYX, Simply Saucer, Kulturkampf, Andy T, FPO, and Columbia scene report.

#305/October '08. Pierced Arrows, Bum Kon, Deep Sleep, Diente Perro, IRA, Legion of Parasites, Reality Control, Riot City Records, Stations, Test Patterns.

#306/November '08. Brain Handle, Assassins, Diodes (pt. 1), 97 Shiki, Black Dove, No Bunny, Shellshag, Sista Sekunden, Vivian Girls, Animals And Men.

#308/January '09. Punks & Film Special with Target Video, Whatever Happened To Susan Jane, Cleveland's Screaming, Mondo Vision, After the Salad Days, You Weren't There, Botinada, Taqwacores, and more.

#309/February '09. Ooga Boogas, Mind Eraser, Cococoma, Extortion, Boyracer, Nixe, Mr. California, Deathcage, Squalora, Maniax, Null and Void, Think Fast.

#310/March '09. 2008 Year-end Top Tens. Health Issue Special–Interviews with Mikey Mind, Chris Colohan and Craig Lewis, plus tons of articles.

#311/April '09. Print Media special with Erick Lyle (Scam zine), Shit-Fi, Z-Gun, Terminal Boredom, Tales Of Blarg, John Holmstrom (Punk magazine), History of skate zines, Punk flyer art, and a dozen one-page fanzines.

#312/May '09. Criminal Damage, Never Healed, Masonics, Screaming Females, Germ Attak, Petticoats, Condominium, Passion Killers, Pioggia Nera, & the second part of the health issue.

#313/June '09. Cult Ritual, Acid Reflux, NN, Herds, Hunx and His Punx, Grass Widow, Project Hopeless, Defect Defect, Tom's Midnight Garden, Existers and scene reports from Sydney and Boston.

#314/July '09. Libyans, Coke Bust, Strange Boys, Turboslut, Vogue, Smart Cops, Zyanose, Dennis Dread, a History of Squatting in Italy, Tornonto Scene Report.

#315/August '09. Zero Boys, Skin Like Iron, Punch, The Black and Whites, Insomnio, Resist, Blank Dogs, Etacarinae, Come On, London and Brest scene reports.

#316/September '09. Amebix, Born/Dead, Divisions, Meatlocker, Something Fierce, Mutating Meltdown, Altercado, Anal Warnead, Nick Toczec, Cowley Club, Albany Scene Report.

#317/October '09. Queer issue, with Nastyfacts, Gary Floyd, Limp Wrist, Jos Seein' Red, GB Jones, Younger Lovers, Vaginal Davis, Josh Ploeg, Teu Pai Já Sabe?, Schwarzer Kanal, Bromance, Extra Tongue, and more.

#318/November '09. Destino Final, Ratas Del Vaticano, Hex Dispensers, John Joseph/Cro-Mags, Explode Into Colors, Ratos De Porao, Stupids, Antidotum/Czosnek Tour Diary, Disco Assault, Fuera De Linea

#319/December '09. The Fix, Slices, Nodzzz, Brilliant Colors, Positive Noise, Gun Outfit, Pink Reason, Scrotum Poles, Gandhi's Cookbook, Goner Fest Photospread, Punk On Kuollut, Eläköön Hardcore: A Personal History of Finnish Hardcore

#320/January '10. MRR Top Ten of the Decade, D-Clone, Broken Water, Complications, Control, Ian Glasper (*The Day the Country Died/Burning Britain)*

#321/February '10. Photo Issue. SOLD OUT!!! Sorry...

#322/March '10. MRR Review Staff's 2009 Top Tens, Japanese artist Sugi, Death, Dry-Roy, Druid Perfume, Kim Phuc, Defensa Absoluta

#323/April '10. The Spits, Face the Rail, Battletorn, Scatha, Dadfag, Attentat Sonore, Partibrejkers, Mob Rules, Last Pogo, John Paull Williams from Really Red, Chuck Warner.

#324/May '10. Bruce Rochrs memorial,, Kleenex/Liliput, Necro Hippies, Isterismo, RVIVR, Iceage, Tubers, Rot Shit, Beefeater, Cairo IL.

#325/June '10. X (Australia), Daylight Robbery, Ty Segall, Morne, Nü Sensae, Pollution, Th' Inbred, Bad Sports, Wankys, Rakosi, Lotus Fucker

#326/July '10. U-ron from Really Red, Slang, Bunny Skulls, Trash Kit, Sedition, High Castle, Marcel Duchamp, Street Eaters, Circle Pit, Mehkago NT, Random Conflict, New Orleans and Calgary scene reports.

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LETTERS

Send letters to MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760, or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. No response guaranteed.

Dear MRR—
Ya-tah-hey! I'm writing to let all of the other prisoners reading this know that San Quentin has it's own prison punk rock band, Stillbirth. There are other types of bands here, but when I heard the punk band needed a bassist I tried out and have been playing since. At some point in time here someone took the initiative and got at the cops about our own kind of music being heard and made it happen. Maybe you could do the same at your pen.
Sinseriously,
—Wayne Campbell, AA4612
http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Facilities_Locator/SQ.html

Dear MRR—
After reading Bryony's column in the July 2010 issue, I would just like to point out when she said "but not that many UK band are any good" she is actually quite wrong—people that wanna check out our scene be sure to check out Violent Arrest, Burnt Cross, Whole in the Head, Facel Vega, the Shitty Limits, A.U.K, Hygeine, the Sceptres, the Wankys, Hello Bastards, Hard Skin, War all the Time, etc... I'm sure we have something here for everyone.

And thanks to Tim Brooks for the great review of the Violent Arrest CD on boss tuneage, I know you said the only complaint was it was on CD only, well not anymore... Boss Tuneage and Tadpole Records have done a co-release on vinyl so now vinyl fans can pick up the ten new tracks from this raging band.
Keep up the great zine,
—Darren / Tadpole Records

Hey Darren!
I'll admit to often falling victim to "grass is always greener" syndrome, but gawd forbid that my sometimes overly snarky tones might come across as a flippant dismissal of what we've got at home! It's super exciting and you're right, all those bands rule. It's also good to see someone actually write into the magazine with their thoughts. It's a dying art. A friend said to me when I took this on something to the effect that being the mouthpiece for every UK reader would be too much pressure to handle. I dismissed it at the time but nothing could have prepared me for the barrage of outraged emails, texts and facebook messages picking apart everything from my tastes to personal motivations in detail some months. At least it shows we limeys still read MRR! As such, last month's column saw me incorporating some of the correspondence I've received as a kind of feedback loop to let everyone have a say. Laudable maybe, but fun to read? About as fun to read as feedback loops are to listen to, i.e. not so much. From now on I'm advising everyone to either do the honorable thing, as you did, being a gentleman of style and taste, and write a letter, or else meet each other in Tesco's car park for some kind of intense naked wrestling bro duel of death, or on a messageboard, either way, far away from me!
In Summary: Good point well made chap.
—Bryony
PS. Ahem, incidentally, people who want to see any of those top drawer bands and more in environments that aren't corporate rock holes and don't wanna give their pounds to hipster media conspiracy-owned venues should check out a project my friends and I have been doing in London for dead on a year now, at bigtakeover.co.uk.

Dear MRR—
I would like to say thank you to Fred S. for putting our album on his list for this issue but the name is misspelled. Where it says "handituptohers" it should be "the handituptoheres."
Thanks again!
—Jared

Dear MRR—
I felt obliged to write in after reading the two sentence review of the UK noise punk band the Wankys *American Wank* CD back in issue #323.
Firstly, given the completely derisory nature of the review I think your choice of reviewer is very much in question. I know not all music is to everyone's taste, but you could at least distribute your review material to reviewers who know what they are talking about. As anyone who listened to the noisier side of punk rock in 2010 will tell you, the Wankys are not only at the forefront of the style but have also played a massive part in its current worldwide popularity through their numerous tours and "downtown Noisepunker" compilation albums. To describe them as a "Japanese-Noise-Core punk imitation act" in order to demerit them, is like reviewing an album by saying "these guys are influenced by the Ramones, so they suck." Yes, the band is *influenced* by early Japanese noise punk bands, but to insinuate that the Wankys are a carbon copy with "zero originality" just shows the reviewers complete ignorance about the Noise Punk scene. I think its fair to say that there is no other band active today that could be compared to the Wankys, and their collective pedigree as players, wide knowledge of noise punk history and real love of the music and scene shines through on all their releases. To dismiss the band in such an off-hand way within the pages of MRR, to me, is an insult to our punk rock heritage. The Wankys will probably have toured the East Coast by the time this letter gets printed—if you missed 'em, you missed out!

Check out the *American Wank* CD on Rescued from Life records, it's the Wankys discography so far at a budget price—sorted!
Yours,
—Roddy Ploppy Pants
Wankys Barmy Army
Scottish President.
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P.S. Wankys fans get in touch about the Wankys Barmy Army Fan Club!

Hi Roddy—
Your claim that I wasn't the right person to be assigned the Wankys CD is a fair one—though given the number of records that MRR covers on a monthly basis, it's impossible to make a perfect match every time. I was aware that my review was a blow-off, but felt justified given the fact that the magazine has reviewed a number of the band's past releases and was running an interview with them in an upcoming issue. In other words, most punks who would care are already familiar with the Wankys; as you noted, they are "at the forefront of [a] style" that has achieved "current worldwide popularity." If I had been reviewing a CD by an unknown group, I would've spent more time describing band and their music.

I'll plead ignorance to the finer points of the "noise punk" scene of which the Wankys are a part, so I might have missed what separates them from their peers. Fine. I also realize every group is influenced by someone or another, and with such a rich history of good punk it's harder and harder to avoid that. However, that's why it's all the more important to try and break your own ground. To me, naming your band after another band, naming your record after their record (with essentially the same cover) and lifting their artwork and lyric style is indicative of a fearsome lack of originality that's common in punk today. It's one short step away from being a literal tribute band and it displays about as much effort as the pothead t-shirts they sell on Haight Street or St. Marks Place that say "Mondo Doob" in the Mountain Dew font. I dunno, maybe the Wankys have better riffs or a different distortion tone than this or that other group, but I'm way less interested when they can't even come up with their own identity. I think it's totally fair to call them out on it.

That said, I understand the members of the band are an important part of their respective scene with a legitimate love of the music, and that's something perhaps my review glossed over. What's more, I'm sure they're nice folks and probably put on a decent show to boot. If our paths ever cross, the first round will be on me.
—Chris

Dear MRR—
So I was wearing the Destino *MRR* shirt last night in New Orleans and this kid came up to me and said he had the same shirt, but said he found his in a New Orleans squat and it was wrapped around a bunch of dirty needles. Yikes. Oh and just wanted to say hi.
—Fred

Yo Punks, (addressed to MRR and Diane Anastasio),
Re: "I was a Teenage Zombie" zine review. Dude is on issue THREE and catching shit for not including enough brown lesbian core?! THAT is fully reactionary P.C. Bullshit—give a bro a fucking chance. The ratio of dark/light or sausage/taco really shouldn't MATTER. If you need more brown in your diet, cook for yourself, eh?
—Patricio Gomez

Hey Patricio—
The review in question that appeared in #324 is below. A few things, this review is stellar and a few lines at the end make the observation that the zine always focuses on white dude's bands, not the lack of brown lesbian core (didn't know that existed! Send tapes to Mariam!). Also, there was another review following this one of the 3.5 issue of this same zine that was a just as glowing, if not better, review. I agree that it's a great zine. "PC reactionary Bullshit," I didn't realize we were still in the '90s and if that were the case, some close-minded asshole would have dismissed the zine all together. That is the pitfall of not being able to take things inclusively, like say dwelling on a non-malictous opinion based on a few lines of factually correct observation of an otherwise great review… I agree that it shouldn't matter, but it does. If ya didn't notice, there are tons of punk/hardcore bands with underrepped people, like brown lesbians for instance, that just don't get much attention. If they are included, often the zine automatically has some "specialization" designation, having the stigma of lacking "authenticity" or some other bullshit to push it outta hardcore. Bro's have had their chance in punk from '80s till now. We have plenty of brown in our diets, particularly when we get shit sandwiches like the "PC" complaints, coupled with "not radical enough" stuff. Cook for ourselves? We do, it's called Maximum Rocknroll. Get with the times. Stop whining. Be a woman.
One Love,
—Mariam

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This issue of the Midwest hardcore fanzine features an interview with Arizona's PIGEON RELIGION, who divulge the secrets of their first LP, as well as, how they have come to be "the best band in the world right now." Aside from this interview, the zine is filled with its usual content: epic record/tape/zine reviews, which actually end up resembling descriptive short novels about the feelings that the music evokes, rather than your typical pithy record review. It's different and refreshing to receive an in-depth portrayal of the music that is coming out of the punk and hardcore scenes right now, and these little novellas that Erik fabricates are pretty much my favorite thing about this zine, aside from the cut-and-paste photocopy aesthetic. My only complaint is that this zine very rarely (perhaps never?) features any music or zines made by people who are not white men, which fosters the idea that these are the only types of people who participate in punk. Clearly false. (DA)
Erik Meyer / 1142 Illini Drive / O'Fallon, IL 62269 / girlproblems@hotmail.com

Dear MRR—
I just stopped by your guys' website for the first time and was saddened to see that Bruce Roehrs has passed away. That's very sad, and kind of ironic—the reason I was looking you guys up is related to a different death in the *MRR* family—albeit one that happened quite a while back.

I've been digging through my records lately and ripping some of my old vinyl when somebody mentioned that some of my records are worth a few hundred dollars now, but not being a capitalist piece of shit, I could really care less. It just reminded me though; when Tim Yo passed away I remember there being this big hub-bub because some ass decided to go in the *MRR* basement and swipe some really rare records with the green tape on em... I think some early Misfits and maybe Child Molesters? Anyways, I've tried to push it to the back of my mind, but this has really bothered me ever since I read about it back in '98 or '99—whenever it happened. So I guess some one here at *MRR* could help me out: was this ever resolved? Did anybody ever get caught, or at least, did the records ever come back home?

I know this probably seems like a silly email and something silly to be bothered by, seeing as how our country's involved in two or three foreign wars and Wall Street is trying to pillage us, but I guess it's like when you see a really good movie and the power cuts out before the end and you're dying to know what happens or something…

Anyways, thanks for your time. Next time I come across some money I'm planning on mailing a lil' something for the Bruce memorial. I really liked his column, he knew about some really awesome bands. (And really loved some horrible ones too—but you take the bad with the good, eh?)
Peace Love and you know the rest.
—E

Hey E—
Yep, people have abused the trust placed in them by MRR and stolen from the record collection. The theft you are talking about is the most notorious one, which happened shortly after Tim died. Truly scumbag.
—Layla

Dear MRR—
Thank you for sending me the May issue!!! Shits been hella fucked up here and we are on lock down, so plenty of time to read. Down to six months! Ha! That's the last time I Drink and drive though, shit! So I figure that I should at least tell you a fucked up story or two for your troubles.

So there is this Queen, let's call her "Terrie Ann." Well, she's a big girl, 6'2 and 240 lbs. I've seen her around the prison yard and being a convict I'm respectful to everyone, cause shit, that's still a man and "she" may knock you the fuck out. That, along with my Mother is gay and so is her girlfriend (I wasn't planned for, wink, wink). And I'm from the city. Anyways, well someone calls her a "Ratt" behind her back and it gets back to her. I happen to be walking back to my cell after work and I see her getting all "manned up," hat on, fingerless gloves and a t-shirt. And for the first time I hear her use a deep man's voice, "O hell no, that Motherfucker." So needless to say, I'm intrigued, like "who's gonna get their as beat?" So, during chow, she walks up to this dude, in front of everyone (all the Races and C.O.s) and starts giving this dude shit. Stuff like, "Where is the paperwork, bitch?" and more tuff guy shit. Totally out of character from what I've seen of her. And remember "Terrie" ain't some "frail homosexual". She went in a quarterback and is coming out a line backer. And don't forget, calling another man "bitch" is fightin' words even more so in front of people. So after the dude backpedals and is speechless "Terrie" pulls one of the funniest moves I've seen in all of my years in the pinta… She says in her "man" voice, "you've just been punked… (and then in her "Queen" voice) by a punk" and spins on her heel and with a snap of her fingers and a swagger in her step. Ha!
Keep it Krusty
—Tober
P.S. The Brontez column [in issue #324] Hell yeah! Too Short! Fuck Yeah! You know he plays the Bass in his first album? "The city of Dope" and "cuss words" the SMA? "Punk rock don't stop, from the hood to the cell block."

Hi MRR—
As a strict reader of your fine magazine and responder to some of your advertisements I have the following warning: in January 2010 I ordered some records from Jay Harris' Internet record shop Hardcore Holocaust records. I have never received my records and Jay is not responding to any of my emails. I did not have Paypal insurance because of the amount of time that had past when I contacted Paypal. However, I heard from Nick from Crime Against Humanity records that I was not the only customer who had not received records from Hardcore Holocaust. I just want you to know that Jay Harris defrauded on my transaction (amount of $64.25) and maybe is defrauding more. I don't know if he advertises right now in MRR, but let other people be warned.

If you want you can print this in MRR, it is up to you. If you happen to know Jay personally, please tell him to contact me and set this straight for me (don't know about the others who complained through CAH Records).
Thanks anyway,
—Rob van Zoen
Obrechtstraat 389A
2517VB Den Haag
The Netherlands

Thank you for your letter, Rob. Yeah, Jay Harris is an allegedly notorious swindler. Hardcore Holocaust does not advertise with us, nor would we ever allow it. Actually, he owes MRR $232.31.
—Mariam

Dear MRR—
My name is Takiaya. I am writing you all as a guest, reporter of what I've seen, a traveler, loves of many people and things, person of color, woman and enthusiast /supporter/maker of music. I am also writing to spill my guts.

So approximately two years ago, I was an 18 year old from a small town in Texas. Punk rock was a concept I had been briefly introduced to by a friend named Vicky. She moved away and I drifted back into my world of Shostakovich and every other composer that filled my room. In High school all I ever dreamed of was playing classical music. In my opinion that's all the saxophone would even do if I was playing it. Then for college I moved to Miami. I was determined to stay focused on classical music and then make a trip to the bike shop where I met my friend Cara who invited me to a critical mass and her collective house, the Firefly. All of these new things I had never heard of or had been exposed to. One day there was a show at her house and I brought my saxophone to play her a song. Next thing you know I'm playing in like eight bands and meeting people who "travel." Perhaps I could travel.

After an intense visit with my parents they insisted that I not play with my band Cocktail Pirata that was going on tour in two days, So my band members kidnapped me for Fresh Fest in Tallahassee, FL. Normally at these events, I barely listen to the music, because I don't respond well to "dude bro fest" and wasn't feeling a connection to the music. However, I ventured inside to find cranberry juice and heard something so beautiful. The Necro Hippies. It was like nothing I've ever heard. Not like I heard much before that anyways.

After their set, I met the guitarist, Candice and told her how sweet it was. She lived in New Orleans so I went to go visit her. We made music and a band called Deny It. Shortly thereafter, we met Osa. Deny it instrumentation, drums: Osa, Guitar, Candice, Saxophone: Takiaya. Our band has changed my reality. I've been exposed to so many amazing musicians, music and things. As a response to all of these cool things I also am learning my preferences.

I get irritated when certain things happen. For example, male domination in music where no diversity exists on the stage. So I have officially complained. However, what my reaction to this is I try to play music wherever with whomever. Because I am consistently traveling, this works.

In New Orleans, there are No More Fiction shows. They focus on Ladies/Queers. New Orleans and the south in general need something of this caliber. In the community there are also these random amazing people helping to fight against "dude bro fest." Every time I go back things get better and better.

These past few months were my first time in the west coast. It's so established and clean cut; so many attractive and healthy people. There's a word in Russian pronounced zzzdoorava that accurately describes the west coast. It was amazing. Being around all of that west coast, PNW stuff makes me hella ready to do something.

Sometimes when I'm staring in the stars I ask why. Then there are those random moments when waling down the street I see someone I had a special moment with made possible by punk rock. Slowly I am learning that punk is no exclusive "to how many pounds of dental floss you have holding your clothes together." Thus making is more accessible to me. It's this complete universal all encompassing thing that's often times impossible to describe. When I hear certain DIY sounds slipping from the speakers I think I'm in love. All at the same time I think my heart might explode or I might stop breathing this is so much in a short period of time. Everything is so intense and that is okay.
—Takiaya

Dear MRR—
In response to Logan's column in issue #326, reading this column the first time through infuriated me. Here is a kid who whether or not he realizes it is exceedingly privileged, writing a story about how he felt bad a little while after receiving public assistance then grew to accept it? The arrogance of this piece just reminds me of everything I despise about associating myself with the punk scene.

Certainly using the system as it is intended, proving that you do not have enough taxed income to provide yourself and your dependents with basic necessities, is "not going to take money away from starving babies". Regardless of which people's valued opinions in the punk community found this to be acceptable behavior, I for one found Logan's tone and implied attitude in the column atrocious.

This country is not great because it allows for parasitic "artists" to avail themselves of welfare programs while having a smartphone, iPod, and the ability to travel cross-country. It was made great, and pardon my conservative tones here, by people that did whatever it took to provide for themselves and their families. People that worked hard every day of their lives and still managed to have a great fucking time, like the late Bruce Roehrs.
—Joshua Stein
competitioninme@gmail.com
Embrace the image it's not your own.
Isn't poverty fun? When you can turn it off and on?
You'll know oppression
When you no longer have the choice
But for now, What a nice fucking game
-Left For Dead "Dirt"

Joshua—
I think I owe you an apology. I'm not apologizing for getting my privileged ass on government assistance or anything like that, but it seems there was a little mix up here at MRR HQ. When I initially starting writing this clever little retort I was under the impression that I was writing the comedic genius Ben Stein. You know the " Clear Eyes" guy. So, for that I am sorry. Seeing as you are not him, I have nothing to say to you.
Best Wishes (EABOD),
—Logan " America's #1 Parasitic Artist " Worrell

I might not agree with the tone, subject matter addressed or even response that our columnists choose, and I would have to agree with you, Joshua, that I can't stand food stamp tourism either. It is really upsetting when punks get food stamps when they don't need them and brag about how they are "fucking the system." Sounds like when FLDS (Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints or Mormon Fundamentalists) say they are "Bleeding the Beast." It is all too similar when punks move into underprivileged and disenfranchised neighborhoods without becoming any part of the community; basically punks who revel in "slumming it." It's sickening and insulting.

With that being said, I will not go into the specifics of Logan's life, childhood or financial status (because it's no ones business), but to say that a person is "exceedingly privileged" is awfully presumptuous. I understand that you may be able to make assumptions about any one of these columnists based on their writing, particularly because their voice is the image they choose to project, but there are some things that cannot be deciphered.

I have to also point out that the "Manifest Destiny" ending of your letter makes me wonder how much about North American history you actually know. Sometimes hard work is not enough to make it in the US and the idea of "pulling yourself up by your boot straps" has failed many. In reality, I would argue that exploitation of migrant workers, people of color and the working class, not college kids, has made this country "great." Some people in this country do not even have basic human rights of movement to go where work is needed, but I digress.

Thank you, though, for sending this letter, because I do think that the issues surrounding punks in this context are complex and convoluted. They need to be addressed somewhere.
—Mariam

Dear MRR—
The incorporation of "bigoted symbols and language" in punk rock is most likely 20 years older than *MRR* columnist, Osa Atoe. An entire page of your publication could easily be filled with punk bands (of any race and/or sexual orientation) who have done so....from the Electric Eels, Toxin III, the Dicks, and the Bruce Roehrs championed ANTiSEEN to more recently Kajun SS, Pink Reason, Ratas Del Vaticano, and Useless Eaters. None of this directly supports the right-wing agenda anymore than buying a cup of independently brewed coffee. To use something as obviously ridiculous as a swastika fashioned from crawfish as a launching point for southern-gay-black oppression and against straight-white-punk males is, to me, just as ridiculous as the crawstika. Actually, the "creators" of the crawstika were a politically outspoken Latino punk and his female artist partner both who have lived and breathed punk rock since it's beginnings. Yes, rape is still a problem in New Orleans as is flooding every time it rains, but not as far as I can tell a product of the straight-white-punk male nor the right-wing agenda. I understand she was referring to Hurricane Katrina and the Bush administrations actions but the city would have flooded regardless of who was in charge. I applaud Osa's efforts in the New Orleans D.I.Y. community; she really has her work cut out for her. New Orleans is a beautiful and magical city, but it is also corrupt and racist from every angle: black, white, brown, yellow, red, sissy, and straight.
Take care and stay punk,
—Captain Beyonce
PS.....upon re-reading this letter I feel as though maybe I have just said nothing.

Well, your PS is not entirely correct. You did say quite a few things in your letter. I know that irony is all the rage and for good reason; sometimes using controversial imagery can be funny if used in a funny way, but regardless of what your humor may be, if you dish it out, you have to be able to take it. Wearing a crawstika shirt may seen like some obvious statement to someone who knows the origin of its creation, but a swastika is a loaded symbol. Punk exploits the shit out of that symbol in particular without paying attention or knowing what it means to people who have been affected by the fucked up shit it stands for. Back in the day, the connotation had different signification than it does now. It's twenty fucking ten and what happened in the early eighties is important to know about, but times have changed. Using controversial imagery is often about selling records, "pushing buttons," and not really about taking people out of their comfort zone in a constructive or meaningful way. Whether or not Osa knows that the image in question is a "punk" one, it still means so much more to those of us who have been directly affected by racism and so much more to Jewish punks whose family history is linked to what that symbol brings up. I cannot speak for the groups I just mentioned, but the risk of offense is there and on levels that cannot be fully comprehended by those who are not affected. We all fucking know better, even with different levels of cultural experience, we know that it's controversial. If you choose to wear that symbol, even made out of Crawfish, you had better be prepared to answer some questions about it. It's not about fighting, but it's about accountability. If you are a punk, you deal yourself into the dialogue, whether you are comfortable with that or not. It might be silly to some, but recognize it is not silly to others. Wake up.

Also, insinuating that the use of a swastika is ok because it is used by a Latino and a woman is ludicrous. "Minority" can mean a combination of various ethnicities and while we may be capable of empathic exchange due to shared experiences because of minority status, we all still have distinct identities that may not be obvious to some, but very important to ourselves.

Also, the design may be an old one, but symbols change their connotation and relative meaning in different context. There are more punks of all shades now and what may have been acceptable to punks before may have changed. While I could never get behind the word choice, when the Big Boys say, "we won't be white niggers no more," I get it, but when Patti Smith says, "outside of society that's where I want to be" defining her yearning to be a "rock'n'roll Nigger," I can't behind that shit. You can't discount people's experience and you can't expect to use those symbols without answering for it. Punks of the past had to and punks today have to as well. If people don't give a fuck, that's fair, but ignoring that you are engaging in the discussion is ignorant and irresponsible. Osa's age is important, she is one of many faces of what punk is now. Aged punks can either embrace it, or live in the past, but the door is open to them. I suggest we get with the times, live in the now. Check out what is happening, because if you want to listen to killer music and maybe learn about one another's backgrounds, experience and culture, we won't care about your age if you don't. We will celebrate it.

New Orleans may be riddled with corrupt and racist people including your description of "black, white, brown, yellow, red, sissy, and straight," but that's why we are punks. We exist in a scene that is able to break down some of that bullshit and what ever we can't break down with music, we can break down with communication, that is, of course, if you are a decent human being and a real punk…
—Mariam

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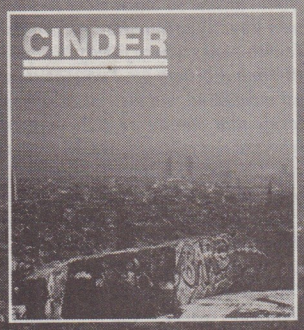

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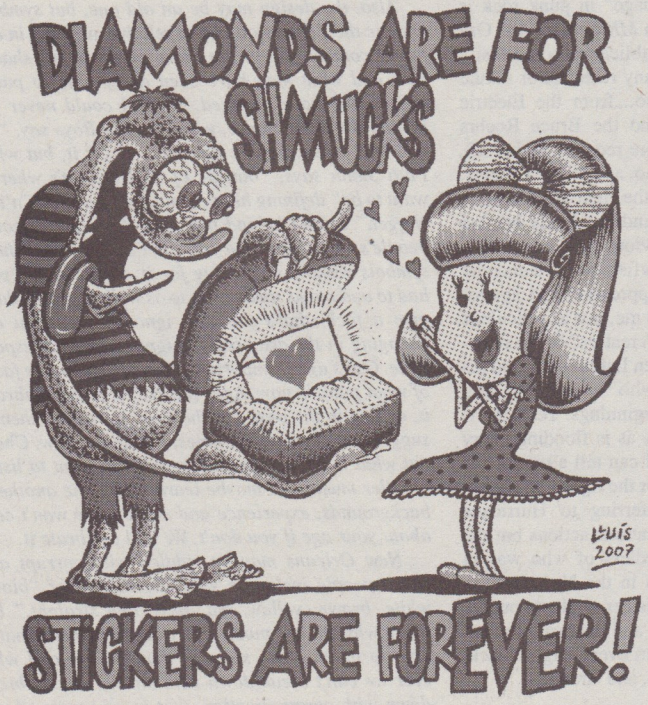

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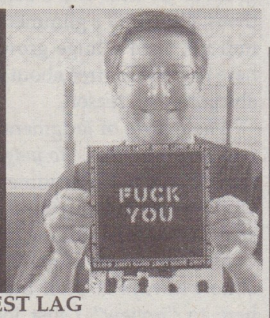

FEST LAG

I'm sure I won't be the only person to ruminate on Chaos In Tejas in this issue, or maybe the next one. You'll be treated to all the tales of debauchery, shenanigans, craziness, et al. I can't wait to read Belden's account, if he chooses to do so. I somehow managed to avoid most of the above, even though it was still an exhausting weekend—so exhausting that I'm not sure I'd be up to a four-day fest in that kind of heat again, or any type of weather, for that matter. Hell, I didn't even go to the day shows or late night after-shows and was still a zombie most of the weekend. I was also isolated as hell. Note to self: if you're going to stay at a hotel four miles up the highway from downtown Austin that's not amenable to walking anywhere, make god-damned sure you rent a car or prepare to be at the mercy of others for rides or shell out for cab rides downtown. I blew it, I was an idiot. It could have been a better time. By Sunday, I was starting to feel whiny. Stranded in the hotel room, feeling restless. Counting down the hours until I went home. And after I got home, it was several days of feeling like I was in a fog. At least the hotel was nice—I loved the breakfast buffet with make-your-own-waffles in the shape of the state of Texas. I wish I'd seen more of the city, socialized more, made better plans. I really feel like I missed out on a lot of stuff.

I'm also not that enamored of shows at big rock clubs. Too damned much smoke, even though Emo's main room is technically outside, but that doesn't help much. I realize you can't do the bigger shows in a basement space or small hall, but that doesn't mean I like it. I've been to worse places—same with Red 7—but I still hate clubs. I also wish there was one pass to gain access to all shows so people wouldn't have to shell out for tickets at each venue.

Still, it was hard to pass up the chance to see the likes of TALK IS POISON, BASTARD, THE PIST, WASTED TIME, SUBHUMANS and other bands. TALK IS POISON was the band that sealed the deal for my attendance. They were one of my favorite bands in the late '90s—that band's pure onslaught really grabbed my ear back then. It was loud and fast but not immediately subject to pigeonholing. Ellen and I were in SF in January 2000 and missed seeing TALK IS POISON by two days. They split up soon after, and I've long lamented never having had the opportunity to see them.

So I was pretty fucking giddy with excitement over finally getting to see this band, and let me tell you, they were as great as I hoped they'd be. If I'd had a safe place to stash my camera and glasses when I was down front, I'd probably have taken my first stage dive in years. As it was, when they got to "Forgotten," I just about lost it anyway. I probably looked like I was in the middle of an epileptic fit—I *do* have a mild form of epilepsy but haven't had a seizure in over four years, and they never reached the level of delirium I was feeling at this particular moment. They played two other times—at an after-show (no energy to go to that one) and the super-secret/exclusive boat show. My invitation must have gotten lost. Riiiiight… Actually, I was chatting with the guy responsible for dispensing the invitations outside Red 7. He had the box tucked under his arm, in fact. I thought it might be bad style to mug him for one, especially since I was tired and he was bigger than me. I think I'll just leave that alone, now—why whine about not being one of the "beautiful people?" That's OK. I don't know if being on a boat with 100-plus drunk punx in 90-degree heat would have been that enjoyable. I do hope that the TALK IS POISON gentlemen will provide me with another opportunity to see them, and that it won't involve having to travel to Texas or the west coast, 'cause that ain't happening anytime soon.

Other bands of note that weekend, besides the ones (all excellent) mentioned above? ARCTIC FLOWERS, who seem to have something of a "buzz"—well, many people were singing their praises. They played a last-second set at Red 7 and announced it via text message. Since I was next to a gentleman who got that message, I was able to catch 'em. The Portland-based band has ex-SIGNAL LOST-er Stan Wright on guitar. Melodic, with shards of post-punk but plenty of drive as well—both forceful and nuanced.

There was a similar incidence of serendipity on the Saturday afternoon of the fest. I'd met up with Roger Morgan (namedrop—he ran Unclean Records and released some NOTA records) and we decided to hit up a few record stores. We ended up at End of An Ear, because I wanted to check out (ex-BIG BOYS) Tim Kerr's very cool art exhibit. A few minutes after we got there a bunch of people show up, and it turns out that Austin band MANIKIN were playing. They've been around a number of years but I hadn't heard them before, and what a pleasant surprise—another band playing in a melodic post-punk style.

KIM PHUC, from Pittsburgh, were an equally pleasant surprise, with Rob Henry's contorted, physical stage presence offset by a heady gnash of garage and "artier" inclinations. WALLS laid out some twisted 'n' damaged rock with an equally intense vocalist and violent musicality.

MORPHEME were also killer, with their KAAOS-inspired Finnish punk and the first song sounded a lot like KILLING JOKE as well. YOUNG OFFENDERS offered a stinging blast of hyper-tuneful punk and the banter back and forth between the OFFENDERS' Brooksy and Dougie and esteemed *MRR* columnist Allan MacNaughton was humorous. I can't wait to get the new 12"; I've been rocking the MP3s quite a bit. HEX DISPENSERS played right before them (this was at Beerland) and were equally frenetic and tuneful, and I'll forgive them for not playing their incredible cover of GARY NUMAN's "Down In The Park." I did request it, but only once, because I didn't want to be that annoying guy who constantly yells out for the same song. It's one of those things you always see on a list of live music annoyances and it's one and done for me. I learned my lesson when yelling for the DIDJITS to play "Under The Christmas Fish" after having seen them do an absolutely mind-blowing version one time. They *did* finally play it as an encore at one Cambridge show. I went into the dressing room after their set to thank them and say my goodbyes and Brad, the drummer, said, "OK, OK, we played 'Christmas Fish.' Now shut the fuck up!" No problem…

While the crowd at Beerland wasn't too bad, for more of a garage type show (granted, I didn't stay until the end for MARKED MEN, since I'd already seen them turn in a good set at Emo's), I have to say I find those audiences obnoxious. And the nerve of one woman to say I stank during the X and SPITS show at Red-7. Look, lady, it's 85 fucking degrees, even at midnight, and I've been inside a crowded club all night. What the fuck do you expect? And I doubt I smelled *that* bad. Anyway, THE SPITS provided an abundance of pogo punch. X, unfortunately, were a disappointment. Maybe it was the jet lag, but their vocalist/guitarist Steve Lucas had a really stiff stage presence and after the solid opener "Suck Suck" things got dull after awhile.

The other major disappointment was POISON IDEA. In fact, it was downright disgrace-

ful. I don't know what substances Jerry had ingested before taking the stage, but to say he was a mess was an understatement. Wandering around the stage, hardly singing, looking completely dazed. The band was competent, although I don't really care for double-kick drums in hardcore bands, but it couldn't make up for Jerry's state. An acquaintance of mine from back home, who said POISON IDEA are his all-time favorite US hardcore band, told me he wanted to cry. And this isn't a guy you'd usually expect to shed tears. I wanted to leave, myself, but my ride was in one of the bands so I had to stick around. *Another* reason to have rented a car. People asked me if it was that bad… anyone who was there knows it was.

On a slightly different topic, I had an interesting conversation with a friend, while waiting for RORSCHACH (who also turned in a skull-rattling set) to play on the final night. The topic of message boards and the internet in general came up, and he told me he's been trying to cut back on internet use, that he'd put a clock on his computer to shut it off after a certain amount of time to force himself away from the machine. That he'd been getting tired of scene politics and the drama but he also went on to talk about how the internet had made things too easy to be into punk. That was the gist of it, anyway. He's sort of an "old-timer" (late 30s, I think) and he remembers that pre-internet era. He was talking about how it was more of a secret society, not easy to access, that there was something special about the fact it was underground, mysterious, kind of away from the mainstream. How it was really easy to be into punk these days, even DIY punk, and that the internet had taken a lot of that away. I think Felix Havoc has expressed similar thoughts—he can correct me if I'm mistaken. One could interpret that to be the same sort of exclusionary mentality that I find irksome at times. It applies to limited editions that are sold almost exclusively over the internet and, before you even find out about it, the record is out of print and already being "flipped" on eBay. A guy who played in a band in Rhode Island once asked me, sometime in the late '90s, if he had to know a "secret handshake" to get shows in Boston. It does seem that way at times—having the right connections, knowing the right people. Seems that way? Come on Al—it *is* that way (sorry for talking to myself—that's another thing that happens when you get old).

It's definitely the classic double-edged sword. I'll be the first to admit I use the net way too much. I did bring a laptop with me on my trip and kept up with the fest's events on a few boards. I just got a "smart phone" and check it obsessively for messages, updates, etc. It *did* come in handy when trying to keep up with the Celtics' playoff game during one of the shows. Hey, why *can't* I have the best of all worlds?

How easy does it make things? Let me give you an example. A few years ago, I was reading a book about record collecting called *Vinyl Junkies* by Brett Milano. In one chapter, he talked about some guys at a record show and one of them finally found a record he'd been trying to find for years, a "holy grail" of sorts. He wrote about how this guy and a few of his friends all gathered around a portable record player to listen to it. It sounded like a cool song so I did a Google search and found an MP3 of it and was listening to it within five minutes. I imagine it'd be awesome to have a "real" copy of it but it'd be impossible to find and I'm grateful I can still hear the music. I even played the song on my radio show Sonic Overload. It was by Michel Polnareff, who was a French pop star, but one of his singles had a garage tune called "Time Will Tell." And I was able to find it on the internet. It shows how much things have changed.

Before closing, sorry for the absence of reviews in this month's column. Check out the "SubVox" blog, which I also need to update a bit more frequently than I have been lately. Record of the month is the pillaging hardcore contained on the debut 7" from MANIPULATION on Fashionable Idiots (www.fashionableidiots.com). Wanton hardcore blaze that will have sparks flying from your stylus—euphemistically speaking, of course. Quite different from vocalist Jordan Atkins' last band, PEDESTRIANS.

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BRACE BELDEN is THE LAST PUNK

Am I the greatest writer of all time? Did I really take a shit in front of a doped-up Jerry A.? Am I a drug addict, or just addicted to drugs? Am I going to get cut from *Max RNR* on account of my managing to write about absolutely nothing for the past seven months? Anyways, Q and As about really nothing for definitely nobody. I hate summer and it's hot out—you don't want to see a guy like me sweat. It's really awful. I got back from Chaos in Tejas (old news by this issue) a week ago and I never want to see another vest again. At least I gotta coppa feel and slept long sleeps and only watched three bands total.

(At this point I start drinking)

Anyways, I like drugs and rock 'n' roll in several forms (but not most), and I like being smart and I like girls and I like walking around and grimacing and being an Actual Person, ergo, thusly, and so—I like Patti Smith.

Alright, hold on, zip back up you fuckin perverts, I don't like her in *that* way, and not just cuzza the fact that she presently resembles/is a withered old half-corpse in jump boots. No, nah, I like her cause of her *music*, if you can believe it, at least, well, on the first single and LP and scattered thereafter throughout various deplorable disks put out by record companies like *Arista*, fuck me, and I like and am gonna be using her as a catalyst for talking about some fuckin' issues I got with you, him, her, and everyone else. Man, I'm using Patti not just for her bod but for what she *represents* (in a way), even though I'm over *40 years* too late to really do it, but what is 2010 "rock writing" but retrospectives anyways (does anyone give one-third of one-half of a shit what some fuckin *band* is up to? I shudder and shiver), and what am I but a retrospective man, in the business of retrospecting times I did not spect in the first place, as in Electric Eels and Street Hassle and The Crystals alike, wasn't even a glimmer in dear dad's ball sack back in any of thens, but I ain't a glimmer in it no more, no suh, nuh uh, I am a huge grown fat junkie and I'm here to write for free about someone you hate for absolutely no reason.

The nature of judgment is a weird one. I get told alla time that *"To judge is to err"*—or something like that—a sentiment at which I do *spit*. Opposite what your third-period Ethics teacher said last week, judging a book by its fuckin' cover is generally a good idea—hell, I'd say it almost always is. Half the releases I'm handed here to "review" I just look at the cover and hammer out a coupla words of advice to whomever shit the thing out in the first place (label and band alike, I make no distinction). But most people I meet, even if they practice what I'm preaching in their own private lives, love to yammer out in public about how *they* would never *possibly* judge a b by its c, no sirree, yet they'll hate Patti Smith without having even heard so much as a single (early) note. *How did this happen?*

But why won't you hear it? Again back to that judging of bounded word-things by their looks, because you probably think she's some dopey stinky hippy broad wrapped up in third-rate Bukowski bile leavings. She ain't. Well, she is now, but she weren't. And why? Because Mom likes Patti, for some reason, and they sell her covers CD in Best Buy, and she looks sort of ugly and off (which I like), and a million other reasons besides. Cool people don't like it. People who take poetry courses do, and they're faggots so burn 'em like the namesake. Well, screw it, for once *you* the *consumer* are *incorrect*—she ain't no humpty-dumpty broken-up broad, nah, if you even read for a second some old interview with her she talks the damned smartest and most honest things I ever heard anyone, titted or non-, say. "When I was younger, I tried to cultivate a fucked walk…" This is a *liberated woman*. She sez she was never interested in burning no bra, no way, she needed the fabric and was too busy besides wanting to be *Mick Jagger*. And come to think of it, why shouldn't she? Mick Jagger has a great fuckin' life. She's honest. Are you?

What the fuck am I talking about?

Gotcha with that one you sonofabitch, I know exactly what I'm talking about, and in no time at all you will too, if you just pay attention for once. *Piss Factory b/w Hey Joe* (MER-1/SRE-1009). Sent chills up my curved and hunched spine when I first heard it and boy did I *hear it*, that guitar and piano combo slapping me in the face and pulling me by my coat collar to stand upright and *pay attention*. "Sixteen and time to pay off…" *Hell*, I was *sixteen*, hell, it *was* time to pay off, whatever

that means (it does mean something). Hell, this is work, hell, this is hell, work is hell and life and awful and life is just to die, baby, holy god, it was like Christ walking out to me while I'm lying stranded destitute dying in some Calcuttan slum and extending his holy hand and stroking my face. "I take a swig of Romilar…" Whatta god dam sacred/funny (they're the same thing) sentence. Poetry. Rock 'n' roll at its best is poetry at its basest, and this is base and basic and *correct*, too. Christ, you can nearly see the caverns and hilltops made by her voice, and even the semi-embarrassing lines ("I refuse to lose") mean at least *something*, cuz this broad this chick this gal was only 18 years old and saying this stuff. And yet, hell, there's so many of you out there who'll never hear nor glimpse the truth and beauty of this, and so nuts to you.

Also, hopefully you're reading this in a record store so you don't have to buy a copy of the mag, and if this is the case you're in fact most likely in close and immediate proximity to a fine sturdy used copy of Smith's first elpee, *Horses* (AL-4006). Starts off with her sneering out "Jesus died for somebody's sins, but not mine…" 1976 and this is a cover of Them's (or could be the Shads of K version cuz that was the one that really broke on thru in Jersey) "Gloria," and when you finally realize what exactly is going on here (almost two minutes in!), it just knocks alla rest of that shit you listen to outta the water. 'Cept maybe real heavy stuff like Velvets. Even Black Flag don't sound as good after (tho ten minutes later it's fine). And listen, punk was in its nascent stages, there's some reggae farts and bleeps that mar the midsection, but believe me that this record is bookended by some fine fucking hits. From "Gloria" to "Elegy," a lotta good sandwiched between, especially that hit and title track, "Horses" (its subtitle) "Land" (its title title) (even though who calls it "Land" anyways?). You can tell the whole record, "Land" included, is written and performed by True Rock Fans (which I can almost half-way relate to, if I squint). Hell, the thing is basically a distillation of rock 'n' roll fandom in its entirety—all-encompassing adoration for R/R. Listen, you can tell. Don't you believe me?

You probably don't. Most likely you wrote me off years ago (if you ever wrote me at all) as a fat polyester drug-addled Elvis without the pompadour (or any of the above actually) with Bangsian delusions writing a column about how sad I am every month for a bunch of cretins who still buy shit like *MRR* in these Tough Economic Times. Shit luck for Brace Belden. Patti can't relate, she's rich and famous and oh, hell, wait, that reminds me, I stopped at *Horses*, where she wasn't rich or famous yet, no, it wasn't until her third (mostly shitty) elpee *Easter* where The Boss himself Brucey wrote a little ditty for her called "Because the Night," and the rest is history that I'll choose to ignore, and I'm running out of words besides. I'll sum it up short: married Fred Smith (no sarcasm *great choice*, prolly had a pecker the size of Manitowac), he fuckin' died, she fuckin' cried, had some fuckin' kids (I think before F.S. bit it), made some terrible, and *I mean deplorable, burn 'em on sight*, records. Ignore 'em. Seek out live stuff from the '70s, all of it is great, my fave boot (and I heard a few) being *Teenage Perversity and Ships in the Night* from a Holland, I believe, gig where she absolutely smokes some Velvets cuts and a Paul Jones (!) solo song from un-hit movie *Privilege* (also covered on *Easter* and being one of the two good trax on it). Second LP too is good, but only really for "Pissing in a River." Piss piss pud. She ain't got one. I don't care. Weird that the other day I was in *MRR* HQ and Layla G. tells me she had just been defending my dubious honor to some slanderer, him saying that I was a scumbag to which L claims I ain't one entirely cuz I got female friends that I don't plug (mostly true). So maybe Patti should gimme some money on account of me being such a nice guy.

But there's nice people everywhere. Dogs are nice. That doesn't mean you have to like someone. And you don't have to like me, just believe me—I wouldn't lie to you, would I?

I am typing this at a desk at the *MRR* compound. Yeah. I've broken the fourth wall, I am inside the matrix. The BB-eagle has landed. Cripes. In a usual month, the only column that would travel further than mine (in er, e-mail miles?) is Dan's (All Foreign Hunk), so to say I'm pumped to be living the dream in San Francisco is an understatement. I'm here chiefly in the name of a month-long burrito blur, fog, putting my fingers on every record ever, helping make rent here whilst joyfully edging your world with miles and miles of that apocryphal green tape.

Wait. Who are you and why I am here? We went to Chaos in Tejas. Summary: bullet-belt Butlins in an oven. Undoubtedly the hottest I've ever been in all my sorry life. Tramping about, indignant at the sun as it refried each afternoon's meal in my distended belly, mulching it around with cheap horrid beer that didn't make me drunk, only full. The British will not be cooked in this way without consequences, poor Ellis fainted on the bus—so dehydrated that his eyes went black and his face went white. (No dramatization there, that's exactly how it was.) It was a bizarre moment of total horror where the only thing you can think is "Why don't I know first aid?" and "Please don't die," compounded due to the fact that we were riding the airport shuttle on the first day, so literally most of hardcore witnessed his collapse. I am not very good at fests at the best of times (read: missing Arctic Flowers and Waste Management due to aforementioned shit-grump antics), I'm prone to social awkwardness, I hate crowds, I like sitting down, and sadly all too often these sorts of concentrated events take as their major participants one too many towering apexes of moronity. On the flipside, I bumped into nearly all my favorite Americans and that was more than worth the entry price. As such, I will leave the band-by-band review to other columnists that will, I've no doubt, cover it with a flourish far more illustrious than I'm capable of. Instead, a few paradigmatic observations. On the second day, I walked past a young man who caught my stunned attention for a few horrorstruck moments, being, as he was, the bodily proprietor of an odor so consuming, so advanced, so *acrid* as to defy its own description, other than to say that he smelt not of sweat or piss, or even shit, but of a kind of human vinegar. Seriously, what makes a punk start fermenting? My eyes actually watered. Sure buddy, screw the system and don't be oppressed, but also have fun wanking alone. Forever. On another equally harrowing tip, being Jerry A. in 2010 must be a sad and lonely predicament. Imagine hiding behind a guitar cab. I did have great fun though, drank bubble tea (first you want to wretch, then you realize this is love) saw a shitload of bats (closet goth) and neon signs (hey, I am big into neon signs). I now know the brilliance of three things I did not before: Nerveskade, the Rival Mob (I have sorely missed the ribald obnoxiousness of the better breed of Lockin' Out bands as a presence in hardcore over the last few years), and a good set of earplugs. Oh, and that sometimes it's easier to just suck it up and ask for "wah-deurgh" instead of "waught-ah."

My jaunt in the Bay Area has been, as you might imagine, quite good. I leave here with my hair smelling of burnt barbeque Soyrizo. I'll remember: Watching Wild Hogs. Vomiting out of Tim Brooks' car window on like my second night here in front of a car full of sober people I was trying to be all cool in front of. That set a precedent. Hours spent gassing and joking and *Eating* with a capital E. Daily Amoeba pilgrimages "just in case." Golden Gate bike rides and learning to Hate/Haight in the '80s with Layla, touching rainbows with "Ain't No Feeble" Bastani. Drinking straight out of a bloody coconut. The church of Logan Dean Worrell. Getting the Fisticuffs Bluff LP for $3. Working a door shift at a Victory records Christian "hardcore" gig. Listening to Wire in a deserted dive bar. Pitch-black forests, secret record parties. Hills, hills, hills. Getting red-carded at a surfer dude Tiki party for (apparently) trying to chug a bottle of lighter fluid (I lie, I can't remember that happening at all). Learning to cycle over tram tracks — "Just stay perpendicular" — and how to ride on the opposite side of the road to at home, just by reminding myself frequently to do that which is unnatural, make the turn that seems wrong. I hope those reminders keep repeating. People can make you find new ways to be yourself you didn't even know about.

In the background of all this whimsy for new brilliance, there's the small matter of conning my post-grad assessors at university into believing that hanging out in what looks and feels like a punk rock reality TV pilot (in the absolute best possible way) for a month somehow constitutes the participant observation ethnographic

research into volunteer-run cultural production (or some errant bollocks to that effect) that I promised to return to the UK with. I know, call me Lux Ulterior, right? As much as I play it down, a little embarrassed at what some would term "backyard research," it's better than the other option of letting some goose pick me a shitty internship where I might not actually just be able to listen to records all day and hang out, right? Anyway, it worked out pretty well because the cumulative amount of graft witnessed has literally blown my tiny mind. Some cheesy "oh how laudable" sentiment is not what I'm aiming for, maybe admiration on a level it's hard to vocalize, either way to see all this and live here even temporarily definitely raises interesting questions about what it *really* means to make your life about your culture. I'd wager few people outside the Bay Area are aware of how much work goes into *MRR*. So far, all there is to report is my open-mouthed staring at superhuman levels of what-we-do-is-secret stalwart organizational brilliance, the likes of which in the world of paid work would warrant a six figure salary and a team of secretaries, but cuz this is punk is undertaken by get-it-done saints in between shifts waiting tables, selling books, and every other manner of work required to make living money. "No one receives any salary" is printed in every issue of *MRR*, but when you think about what that actually entails its pretty wild. How many hours are in your working day? For now let's just say inky fingers are the final link in a very long chain, so moan all you like but the product of hundreds and hundreds of hours worth of activity continues to come out every month. Of course all this is not (normally) part of the narrative within these pages, because it's quite rightly more concerned with covering the punk rock instead, but, as the youth say, "I'm just sayin'."

One other thing: Total Abuse, the internet, European tour, ah blah blah blah memes lolcats what? I guess I set up a London gig then realized I'd be here in SF on the date, leaving it in the hands of some friends who have, in my absence, stepped up in a major way and responded with ingenuity to the ailing clusterfuck that the tour suddenly became, as ever mediated by the bizarre spiraling torture of message board politics. As a point of principle their whole situation can stay away from my brain as I genuinely can't get a handle on it, or at least I keep going back and forth, still missing the solution that's probably somewhere between righteous DIY you-asked-for-it-bro and flagrant fuck-you-I'm-pissing-out-ya-window-bro—but screw it. On a wider level though, it seems that cultural differences re: the way that punk gets done across the world is a tension point *par excellence* more than ever. There are more ins and out than Swiss cheese on this subject, but summarily, if you're going to play even a single gig outside your own town or social circle, acceptance that you actually might not be Elvis has gotta be top of the list, and the one thing to pack along with condoms and sunglasses is a massive, ultra-absorbent bumper pack of humility and perspective. Good gosh, reality breakdown, right? I say this having recently had to tease an apology from another touring US band after being not-that-indirectly called a "fucking asshole" over the mic for not being able to provide them with a third backup guitar head. Of course, they'd only be band number infinity to be faced with the sour and frustrating realization that band-owned backline and gear is sparse at best and non-existent at worst in the UK, so yes, we have to share, putting sometimes undue pressure on touring bands and their equipment, and that them's the shitty, shitty breaks. The guy pleaded "in-the-zone"ness, and we had an interesting if apology-mitigating discussion of his view that, by letting support bands use equipment they had paid to hire, said band were being forced to work harder, longer hours as individuals on their return home…

I can understand that in one sense, but this is dubious logic for those who would view overseas tours as more of a (badly) paid holiday. Perhaps that's the high road; rather what you might otherwise end up with i.e. a bitter lesson in knife-edge false economy, after all punk gigs rarely stand up to business principles. The real juggle of these times is how to reconcile plowing the apolitical "fuck you" furrow of stylistic nihilism that is somewhat *de rigueur* in today's more popular strands of punk, whilst, as is the nature of touring, relying completely on the hospitality and kindness of your hosts, as well as the deep pockets of those that will pay in to see you. For my money, even if it cracks your mystique (and at this point, even *having* one is, at best, a well-worn shtick, and at worst frankly tired, and I mean this re: all "privileged enough to care about nothing" hardcore), if you can start out by just consciously trying not to be a dick, then you can relax from a position of strength, don those shades, and maybe even play some tunes! Trip out on that.

Send green card marriage proposals together with well-concealed Tofutti Cuties and the Action Pact – *Suicide Bag* 7" to bryonybeynon@gmail.com. SHIT! I Have a new zine out, its *Modern Hate Vibe* Four, you probably know if you want it to so get at me about that too.

Late as always I guess, and busy as usual too @ Basement Screams central (my brain). I just got home last night from a little jaunt through the Midwest with my band, and we had some good times, but I forgot my laptop.

Anyway, we went in for a radio session in one city, and I thought it was going to be really easy because I'm like "this guy that has recorded my friend's bands in his spare time and that's basically the same thing," but I kind of had a mixed experience with the whole thing. Truthfully I think a lot of the difficulty came from showing up later than planned to the studio, but here's a couple things I hope I can remember next time anyway.

1) I feel like most radio engineers are probably going to try and mix the vocals louder than they'd actually sound good for your raging hardcore band. We actually did two bands back-to-back in the studio, and I'd say for both the vocal level ended up about 30% too loud. This also had a lot to do with the time crunch we were under. You just can't rush through a mix, even a live one I guess. Keep in mind you're probably going to have to handicap for the fact that whoever is engineering you has probably never heard your band, and may not even listen to the style of music you play. The more you tell them the better it's going to be—hopefully, anyway.

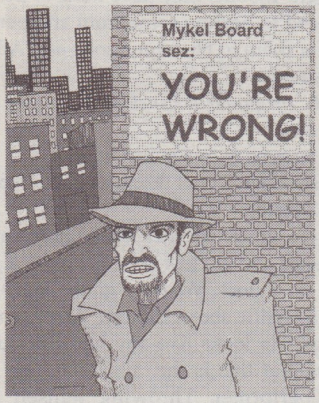
2) The drums. I know I'm always pissing on and on about the drums, but we almost got shafted on this one. Originally it was set up with just two overheads and a kick mic. We caught the foul-up and got a mic on the snare so things didn't sound too bad, but I feel like you've really gotta watch what they're doing with your drums in these situations. In some radio sets I've heard or played on the kick drum gets buried, other times it's the loudest thing on the session. Unless you're a clicky drum guy, keep an ear open that they don't go overboard with the attack. You may also want to consider using smaller cymbals or taping them to kill some of the excess ringing. Take a strip of duct tape and fold a little piece of it in the center so it's like an upside down letter "T," and stick it to the cymbal. It should make it decay a little faster. Maybe put a couple if you need to. You're probably going to be in some small cramped room, so you're not going to want the cymbals washing all over the place, bleeding into all the other mics and making things sound swishy. You can also try a paper plate with maybe two inches in the center cut out laid on top of the cymbal, although this might end up making it more dead than you need.

3) The guitars. I know I'm pretty much going down the list of everything that makes up a normal band here but, anyway… Some folks have a tendency to try and mic the guitar cab speaker a little off center, or with the mic positioned at an angle. Sometimes this can give the guitar sound more body or thickness when you play it back, but I really think it's a big roll of the dice in this situation. First off, it can take a lot of tinkering to get a mic at a 45-degree angle to sound "just right," and it's really easy for it to end up with a boxy, overly muddy sound. You run a risk of losing all the definition of your guitar sound here. The added wild card is that you're in most likely a small room, working on the fly, there" people milling around, there's a time limit—if something gets moved around it may be missed, and it may fuck the whole session. I think this happened to us on our most recent

visit, because my guitar amp sounds like a dull humming noise inside a wet wooden crate.

4) Yeah, the bass too… Keep an eye on what the engineer is doing with the bass guitar. Some are going to want to run it through a DI box. That's Direct Input. You've probably seen this before, but it takes your bass sound into the mix without needing a mic or amp. It can be useful for live sound if you're just running it back out of the PA, but it can also sound weird if you have a really distorted bass sound, or it can leave you sounding too clean and thin. If it sounds too weird to you, try and have them blend it with a mic on the bass speaker as well. Sometimes running the bass through a DI can help give it more definition and presence, so don't automatically assume it's a bad thing if you see one. If they're just using a mic on the speaker they may mic it really close (which sometimes sounds too thin) or they may put it far away to give it a thicker/bassier sound. For some bands this is fine, but for fast hardcore, you may not want a ton of muddy bass clogging up the sound of your live set. It will probably take a little bit of tinkering to get a sound that works for you, one that's neither too thin, too muddy, or too overpowering, so don't rush it—you don't want to lose the bass altogether.

Lastly you may want to actually think about turning *down* when you're doing this kind of recording. It may actually help add clarity to everything if your amps aren't on full, over-the-top power. I know obviously for some bands that's *the sound*, and I also know some amps don't sound "good" unless they're being pushed to the absolute limit, but if it's any kind of option it's worth a try. Live sound and live-in-the-studio sound aren't always going to match up 100%—there's a fair amount of give-and-take you should expect to work with, so be prepared for that.



[NOTE: There may be a little Spanish in this column. I will not translate it. Americans who can't speak Spanish should be deported to where they originally came from.]

An American, a German, and a Mexican are in a sinking boat. Each of them has to throw things out to make the boat lighter.

The German throws out four cases of beer and says, "We have a lot of bear in Germany, so we don't need these!"

The Mexican throws out five cases of burritos and says, "We have a lot of burritos in Mexico, so we don't need these!"

The American grabs the Mexican and throws him out.

"Why'd you do that?" asks the German.

The American replies, "We have a lot of Mexicans in America, so we don't need him!"

—Internet joke

Of course, the Mexican should've grabbed the gringo, tossed him over, and said, *"Nosotros estábamos en America antes que tú. ¡Chinga tu madre!"*

The Aztecs, the first Mexicans, were more advanced contemporaries of the American Indian. The first Spanish speakers came to North America in 1492. Annoying gringos didn't arrive until almost 200 years later.

Now, Arizonans want to keep out illegal Mexicans—and make the legal ones wear a yellow chili pepper for identification. Why? Because Chicanos would rather eat and drink than work and go to war. Because their heroes are professional wrestlers rather than soldier-murderers. Because they idolize rebels more than Christian hatemongers.

White Americans fear Mexicans because they might steal their car radios. Me? I fear white Americans because they might throw me in jail for drinking on the street. Given a choice, I'd say. Take my radio… please!

Those last two paragraphs are part of what I wrote for a documentary on La Merma, one of the earliest and longest-running punk bands in Mexico. I never saw them play, but because of my love of things Mexican, Gilberto asked me to write the intro. The movie will be called *15 Años de Camino*.

In 1984, I produced *World Class Punk* for ROIR. 27 bands, 25 countries.

I never met most of the bands on that CD. They sent me tapes. I fiddled with them in the studio. ROIR pressed and distributed the thing. Once every five years or so I send out 35¢ in royalties.

The band from Mexico was Solucion Mortal. Until this week I'd never met them. Ah, this week, therein lies the tale.

But before we get to the nachos, I need to put out the salsa.

Flashback: It's 2004. I write about Lucho, a Peruvian-American who may be America's greatest promoter of Latin American punk rock. He's certainly the most loved.

A test:

Some attractive brownskin says, "Oh yeah, we're from Bolivia and we played in Chicago in 2001."

You answer, "Oh, do you know Lucho?"

If they answer "Who?" they're lying.

Back to Now: Lucho's been in the US for fifteen years or so. And he's had enough. He and Letycia, his beautiful Mexican-American girlfriend, are tired of the grind. Up at 7:00 to get to work. Home at 7:00. Same thing tomorrow.

Or maybe they just see the writing on the wall. The Arizona ethnic cleansing law is a whole state-full of wall writing.

They're getting while the getting's good. I would too.

ASIDE: "Ah, those Hispanics. If they hate America, why do they come here in droves?"

"Why indeed?" I ask.

Americans work 48 hours a week. By the time the next paycheck rolls around, they have no money. Hispanics relax.

Hispanics smoke weed, drink on the street, listen to loud music, and show up when they feel like it. For Americans, ten minutes is late (except for Negroes, punks, and girls, who are barely Americans anyway).

Hispanics, Mexicans in particular, create the best soap operas on television. Catfights. Incest. Screaming brawls. Sex up the wazoo. America has *CSI: Miami* and *American Idol*.

Latin America gave the world the poncho and the taco. White America gave the world McDonald's and the atom bomb.

Life in America is banal, boring, drab, drudging, dry, dull, exhausting, fatiguing, insipid, irksome, lifeless, soporific, tiresome, unexciting, uninteresting, vapid.

Why would anyone want such a bucket of shit? I donno. I only stay because I have a cheap apartment in New York. **END OF ASIDE**

Lucho's farewell party is in Boston… or some nearby suburb. It's going to be a mad carousal, with punk rock bands, lots of beer, and Lucho-worshipers from around the world. I wouldn't miss it for a threesome with Dominicans… well…

On the same day as Lucho's party, Verbal Desecration, a Mexican band with the drummer of the original Solucion Mortal, is playing at ABC No Rio. I can't fuckin' miss that show either.

Gilberto told me they're coming from Boston by bus. They need to return to Boston to play Lucho's party.

So what's a 70-year-old punk rocker to do?

The answer? Rent a van, meet the band at ABC No Rio, and drive 'em up to Boston so they can play Lucho's party and I can be there.

Here's the plan: they arrive late Thursday via Chinatown bus. Play in Brooklyn Friday night. Then play ABC No Rio on Saturday. We'll meet/set up at 2:00, be off stage at 3:30, then jump in the van, drive to Boston, and arrive by 8:00. Everything timed perfectly.

Yeah, right. *These are Mexicans!* Not only that, they're *punks*. Timed perfectly my white ass!

Thursday: Tonight is Drink Club. We meet at Paddy Reilly's, an Irish bar smack dab in the middle of an Indian neighborhood. I hear they have eight beers on tap—all Guinness. Outside the bar, the street smells like curry. Ah, it'll be a good night tonight.

Steve, the couch-surfing pal who put me up in Trinidad, will be there. He's in town for a few days. He'll take my couch tonight and fill me in on the doings in that blissful island country.

The problem? Gilberto is coming in with the band tonight. Normally they'd stay on my couch, the floor, anywhere. Six Mexicans in a one-room apartment is not a problem.

But Steve is originally an American… a New Yorker. I'm not sure he'd be up for sharing a couch with all those Chicanos.

Besides, they don't get in 'til after midnight. We may be home and asleep by then.

At 9:14, while I walk from the subway to the bar, my cell phone vibrates. It's a text message from Gilberto.

Hey Mykel, U no cheap hostel for us?

A *cheap hostel???* This is New fuckin' York! There are *no* cheap hostels here.

Ah, the guilt. In Mexico, I stayed weeks for free with Mexican punks… and their parents! The fed me, beered me, took me to sex shows… and I'm gonna make these guys stay in a cheap hostel? And there are *no* cheap hostels in New fuckin' York.

Just as I reach the bar door, the phone vibrates again. It's another text message. This one says:

Mykel, I won't be meeting you tonight. A pal of mine tried to kill himself. I gotta take care of him. See you later. —Steve

Near death. What luck for the Mexicans!

I text Gilberto: *4get da hostl. My place 2nite.*

At about midnight, after Drink Club, I come back home… sloshed, of course.

I fall on the couch in a hazy half-sleep.

GZZZZZZZ. GZZZZZ. GZZZZZ.

What? The alarm already? I feel like I just fell asleep.

Through the fog I realize I *did* just fall asleep. My alarm goes MEEEP MEEEP MEEEP not GZZZZZZZ. GZZZZZ. GZZZZZ. That must be the doorbell.

Somehow avoiding puking between the couch and the doorbell, I walk over and press the TALK button.

"*Hola*, Mykel," comes Gilberto's voice, "We're here."

I push the DOOR OPEN button, wait until I hear them click in. Then I run for the bathroom and kneel next to that porcelain receptacle. The smell of fecal ferment disgorges a bellyful of Guinness. Heave! Heave! Heave!

BONG! BONG!

It's the doorbell. With a towel, I wipe a few strands of beer-ralph from my beard and answer the door.

Gilberto gives me a big bear hug, then steps into my apartment, sniffing, but not commenting on the *parmigiana*-scented air.

He introduces my new guests.

First there's Alex, a bearded guy (bass player) who I assume has a painful earache. His hand permanently presses the side of his head. Later, I find out it's not an earache, but a heartache. In his ear-pressed hand is a cell phone. On the other end is his girlfriend. I hope he doesn't want to use the bathroom to jerk off. I forgot to flush the toilet.

Next comes Alan, the grizzled drummer with an easy smile and a hearty, friendly hug. Almost my age, he wears a cap—kind of like a ship captain's hat. I figure he must be going bald. Why else would a punk rocker wear a hat indoors?

"*¡Hola viejo!*" I say. "*Como yo.*"

Next comes the 40-ounce bottle of Reingold. Alan hands it to me. I barely take a sip before passing it to… a teenage goddess.

Seventeen, skinny, a splotch of green through her black hair. Faride's sexier than a chipped front tooth, funnier than a priest caught altar-boy-stuffing, and cooler than the Aquavit in my freezer… and she's the girlfriend of the drummer!!!

That guy is nearly my age and he has the coolest seventeen-year-old girlfriend this side of the Rio Grande. Why can't I???

I'll tell you why. *¡No soy Mexicano!* That's why. *¡Ay, caramba!*

"*¿Hay otros?*" I ask

"Everybody else rented a hotel room," says Gilberto. "*We're* staying at Hotel Board."

"*¡Los otros tienen dinero!*" I say.

"*Si,*" says Gilberto. "And Mykel, speak English. Otherwise these guys won't be able to understand you."

Wise guy.

After emptying the 40-ouncer, Alan and Faride crowd together on the couch. Alan takes off his hat. He is *not* going bald. I don't get it.

Gilberto pulls out a drawer-like mattress from under the couch and lies on that. Where's Alex?

I hear the flushing toilet. Fuck! Well, he's a punk rocker. He should be familiar with the smell of puke. It's punk rock.

Yeah, these exact thoughts will come back later to haunt me. You'll hear about that later.

I check the clock. It's 3 a.m..

"Sorry, buckaroos," I say. "I gotta work tomor… er… today. So I'm going to bed. *Buenas noches.* See you at 2 p.m. Saturday afternoon at ABC No Rio."

"*Muchas gracias,*" comes the chorus from beneath me. "*Duerma bien.*"

I climb onto the loft and fall asleep with a hard-on… fantasies of a seventeen-year-old.

*****

Friday: The pain hits at 8:30 on Friday night. It's sudden, blinding. As if some S&M girl suddenly jammed her stiletto heel into the front of my left ankle.

No warning. I didn't even move it. I'm just sitting at the computer, jerking off to xhamster.com, and then… a sudden strike. Kerpow! Stars! Like in cartoons!

I scream.

No one bangs on the wall. My neighbors are used to weird sounds coming from my apartment.

I look at my naked ankle. No swelling. No blanching. Looks like an everyday ankle. The pain subsides.

Kerblooey! Again… harder. I grab the ankle. Massage. It doesn't help.

What is it?

A strain? Naw, it woulda hurt before, when I injured it. I didn't injure it.

Diabetes? My father is diabetic and always has painful legs. My high blood pressure? It's been up there lately... *Owww!* This is killing me! I can't drive to Boston tomorrow. I need to go to the hospital… *now!*

The pain disappears. Whew. It's passed, whatever it was. Gilberto and the band are counting on me. *Aaaaarrrggghhh!* It's back… with a vengeance.

It hits in a negative of before. From my ankle to my shin. From the middle of my foot to my toes. The only place *not* hurting is where it hurt five minutes ago. I'm gonna die. Tears come to my eyes. Snot drips from my nose.

I don't go to doctors. Doctors spend their time and my money putzing around, not finding things or finding things that they can't do anything about. I'd rather suffer… *Aaaaaah! Kill me now!* I can't take it.

An overnight hospital stay would put a crimp in the Boston plans. An amputation would really make us late. I don't think I could have a stump fitting by 2 p.m. tomorrow. OK, I'll just suff… *Aaaaargh!* Fuck!

I don't sleep much. The pain wakes me at 6 a.m. I return to xhamster.com, type MEXICAN TEENS in the search window, jerk off, and get a few more hours of sleep.

I make it to work, but the pain continues all day. In waves. Ten seconds of pain. Ten seconds of nothing. Ten seconds of pain… in a different place. It's hell.

I work until 9:00, then go home and load up on Advil.

Tomorrow is ABC No Rio.

"We'll be there at two o'clock," Gilberto told me.

Yeah, right.

Saturday: Figuring punk rock time plus Mexican time, I arrive at ABC No Rio at 3:00. It's still way too early… and I still hurt… bad.

About 4:30, Gilberto arrives with the band.

He's smiling… and shaking his head.

"Hey, Mykel," he says. "Sorry we're late. Last night there was a brawl. You know. Pow!"

He lightly hits the side of his face with his fist.

"Fist to face," he continues. "Girls going at it, like a soap opera."

He describes the mini-riot.

Then he asks me about equipment for the band. Since they're touring by Chinatown bus and Board-mobile, they have none of their own. They need to borrow some from another band.

I refer them to Huasipungoist and ABC door king Esneider.

"*Debe preguntar a Esneider. Él lo sabe todo,*" I tell them.

"*Yo no se nada,*" says Esneider.

"*Hasta luego,*" I tell them, as I leave for Hertz with Gilberto.

By the time we get back, they've found equipment and are just setting up the stage. It's almost six o'clock. We were gonna leave at 3:30.

It's a terrific show, though. Alan's son, Alan Jr., sings. He looks like any hardcore kid from the '80s. But this is the '10s. Plus, he's a great active performer. Throwing himself around stage, into the crowd. It's been awhile since I've seen so much energy from a nineteen-year-old *not* on xhamster.com. Oh, yeah!

I know most of the ABC No Rio regulars… especially anyone as geriatric as me. But there's a woman here. In her forties, she wears red… pants and beret. She's Latina-shaped and sits on the merch table with her legs curled under her. She seems to know the Mexicans.

"Who's that?" I ask Gilberto.

"That's [I forget her name, but I'll call her] Carmelita," he says. "Alan's mother. She'll be

traveling with us."

As it turns out, the *seven-person* van will be traveling with:

Alan, the drummer, fifty-something.

Faride, seventeen, the guitar player and Alan's girlfriend.

Alan Jr., nineteen, Alan and Carmelita's son.

Alex, twenty-something, the bass player.

Jessica, around twenty, Alan Jr.'s girlfriend—maybe pregnant, in any case puking the whole trip.

Carmelita, forty-something, Alan's former wife and Alan Jr.'s mother.

Argel, around thirty, and a mutual friend of Gilberto and me. A nice quiet guy—the only one.

Gilberto, thirty-something, I think, the tour organizer.

Me.

Hmmm, singer, singer's mother and father (no longer together), singer's father's new teenage girlfriend, singer's maybe-pregnant girlfriend, heartsick bass player, and a few bit players.

Does this sound like the makings of a tour diary? A Mexican soap opera? Ho ho! You have no idea… but you won't find out either… At least not until next month.

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ENDNOTES: [email subscribers (god@mykelboard.com) or website viewers (www.mykelboard.com) will get live links and a chance to post comments on the column]

—>*Thanks Norb dept.:* I want to thank the Rev. Norb for writing (in *Razorcake)* about how the only reason punks wear hats indoors is that they're going bald. It's one of those things everyone knows, but no one says.

—>*Next door to Arizona, they believe in equality dept.:* The first legal male sex worker in Nevada says he want to be called a *gigolo*, not a prostitute.

He told the press, "This is the first time in the economy of the United States that a male has stood up and said, 'I want to do this for a living,' and be protected under law to do it. It's just the same as when Rosa Parks decided to sit at the front instead of at the back of the bus."

—>The Menifee, California school district has banned *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* because it contains definitions for "oral sex."

—>The Center for Responsive Politics reports that 44 percent of members of Congress are millionaires. Of those, seven top $100 million.

—>*They should play in Arizona dept.:* Don Lewis is the commissioner of an all-white basketball league called the All-American Basketball Alliance. Why all-white?

Says Lewis, "Would you want to go to the game and worry about a player flipping you off or attacking you in the stands or grabbing their crotch?"

—>*Who's the bad guy? dept.:* On the one hand Apple, notorious for cutting off Google from its iPhone… also cut off hundreds of other apps. Many of them were sex-related and were cut *only* because they were sex-related. That gets Apple a big *boo!!*

On the other hand, Apple said that developers cannot use geo-location to target advertisements to users. That gets them a big *yeah!*

Then there's Google. They take anything. Got an app? Google says: "Go ahead!" Yeah!

Not so fast. Right now, Google is working with advertisers to help them use its Android system to target people based on their location. Spam by GPS. *Boo!!*

The moral? With megacorps there are no "yeahs." only more or less "boo" for your buck.

—>*Coming next to an Arizona near you dept.:* The Republican candidate for the Third District Congressional Primary in Iowa wants to do something about illegal aliens. He wants to implant microchip tracking devices under their skin. Then, we can all keep tabs on them with our Google Android phones!

The Iowa Independent has the details:

"Candidate Pat Bertroche made it clear that he wasn't joking when he suggested treating undocumented immigrants like pets.

"'I think we should catch 'em, we should document 'em, make sure we know where they are and where they are going,' he said. 'I actually support microchipping them. I can microchip my dog so I can find it. Why can't I microchip an illegal?'"

—>*Makes you wonder about Yahoo dept.:* In its reports on the Times Square smoking-car incident, Yahoo wrote:

"Officials said the device found Saturday was crudely constructed, but Islamic militants have used propane and compressed gas for years to enhance the force of explosives. Those instances include the 1983 suicide attack on the U.S. Marines barracks at the Beirut Airport that killed 241 U.S. service members, and the 2007 attack on the international airport in Glasgow, Scotland."

Funny they didn't mention the fertilizer in the car, or that Christian terrorist Timothy McVey used it in America's second largest terrorist attack.

—>After pressure from civil liberties groups, school officials in Menifee, California returned *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* for student use.

—>*What a surprise dept.: Life Extension Magazine* reports that medical journals with the *most* pharmaceutical ads published significantly *fewer* major articles about dietary supplements than journals not supported mainly by the drug industry.

Those drug-pushing journals were also twice as likely to conclude that "dietary supplements are ineffective."

—>*The right way and the wrong way dept.:* Frankly, I don't give a shit about your underpants. But if New York State Senate President Malcolm Smith wants to buy "Stop the Sag" billboards, it's his dime. The senator has, in fact, paid for posters and billboards to ask colored people to pull up their pants.

"It's a matter of pride," he says.

I say: depends on what you're proud of.

On the other hand, Trenton, New Jersey, Atlanta, Georgia, and several cities in Louisiana have legally banned the style, fining people whose trousers drop too low. *That* is the wrong way. Whose pants are they, anyway?

It's as wrong as the French banning head scarves. Laws dictating fashion? Jeezus, where will it end? Laws banning ethnicities? Oh, I forgot. Arizona.

So this column is going to be a little different than my usual "all noise all the time" format. Recently my friend Tony (the brains behind raw punx fanzine *More Noize* and online zine archive Punks is Hippies) has been stirring the pot on various internet forums regarding zine culture today. I intended this to be a bit more of a back-and-forth discussion, but the dissertation he sent in reply is too good not to print in its entirely. Of course, I couldn't help but ask a few music-related questions at the end. Ladies and gentlemen… the question:

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Sir, please explain your stance on virtual vs. hard copy zines and how *More Noise* progressed from a web-based zine to its current form. In particular I'm interested in the invective you've recently directed at punk distros that do not order zines.

Like everyone, I prefer to read zines on paper. A zine is something you can carry around and read wherever you are—on the toilet, on the bus, in the bar, in the supermarket, or wherever. Every time I leave my house I usually grab a zine (or a book). At the same time, I am all for zines on the internet because content is what truly matters, not the format. But to be honest, I have yet to see a zine that works as well online as on paper.

While most people probably know me best for the stupid nonsense I drop all over the internet, *More Noize* is actually something entirely different to all that. It started out as a practical experiment in making a zine on paper that would not require me putting any money into printing. In my experience printers charge more depending on the number of pages and the level of black ink used per page. I had already failed to publish a zine because it had too many pages. For *More Noize* the idea was therefore to do away with covers, backgrounds, band photos and album art, etc. The zine would simply be text! The text would moreover be formatted into as few pages as possible. This would allow me to print the zine at work without anyone noticing that it wasn't work-related. The great irony is that I have recently found a digital print shop that is extremely cheap, so printing the zine is no longer an issue of affordability for me.

Now, I know a lot of people don't agree with this, but I think the international DIY punk

scene in 2010 is in extremely good health. There are amazing records being released all the time! Bands like Herätys, See You In Hell, Destino Final and System Fucker are proof of this. I don't think there could be a better time to get involved in DIY punk than in 2010.

As for zines, all the time I hear people complaining that there are no fanzines around today. I always respond by pointing out that actually there are a number of great active zines around today, like *Distort*, *Evil Minded*, *Not Very Nice*, *Ploppy Pants*, *Gadgi*, and *Ripping Thrash* to mention just a few. If you dig deeper you will find that there are hundreds of zines around today. This past week I have got a number of great zines from places like Norway, Australia, Indonesia, Spain, and Brazil, and all of them being in English and about hardcore. Isn't that great?

Now, I understand that releasing punk records usually means losing money (hell, the same applies to publishing fanzines!) but in my experience trying to shift copies of *More Noize* to punk distros, you might as well not even bother. There are some exceptional people doing DIY distros and punk labels out there who are extremely supportive of fanzines, but sadly very many distros would not even consider stocking a zine. In the words of a very big distributor of punk records: "Your fanzine won't sell." But I know this is not true, because I have sold almost one thousand copies of the four issues of *More Noize* in total. Evidently it will sell. But no, these distros seem convinced that no one will buy the zines, that no one reads them, and all the rest of it.

I think that people are under the impression that there are no zines today as a direct result of distros refusing to stock zines. To me this correlation is not even controversial. I fail to see why punk zines should not be sold where punk records are sold. I would argue that punk zines are just as important as punk records.

I get emails in support of the *Punks Is Hippies* zine archive almost every week from people who write how much they miss fanzines. And let me tell you that I am fucking so bored and tired with having to tell people that "we're still here." On the cover of my zine I wrote "Fanzine Radikal" in homage to Firmeza-10 (great LP!), but personally it has come to reflect the urgent need to shake up a cozy businessmen's DIY market place and the need to educate kids about the joy of hardcore fanzines.

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Top five recent releases?

1. PEOPLE – "Fairy Tale" CD-R

Amazing Japanese noise punk band. The purest mix between "noise" and "punk" I have ever heard. SEX PISTOLS songs with drone guitar noise. THE SWANKYS, SEX PISTOLS, Beer, Swastikas, S&M, Fuck Forever. Truly amazing!

2. THE WANKYS – *Wank Mag* / "Weapons of Musical Destruction" 8"

Great magazine with free record. The record has the most violent guitar sound ever and horrible, horrible vocals—but with sweetest bass and drum lines.

3. LOTUS FUCKER – s/t LP

Best debut US HC album in years. POISON IDEA and BAD RELIGION, GLOOM and PAINTBOX, TERVEET KADET and WRETCHED. The question is, how did these non-punk kids get into punk in the first place?

4. HERÄTYS – s/t LP

DISCHANGE meets RATTUS. I have seriously played this hundreds of times already. To quote my friend: "I like! I like! I like! I like! I very like!"

5. FIRMEZA-10 – "Hardcore Radikal" LP

Ok so this was a reissue. I don't care—for me it is recent and I love it. It is inept, it is crude, it is raw, and it is everything I want from hardcore punk. Besides, I kind of owe it to the band for ripping off their artwork ha ha ha.

***

Upcoming releases you're most excited about?

There are so many great forthcoming releases that I have heard about. It is overwhelming trying to remember all of them. I actually asked my friends Paco Mus, Jesus, and Teodoro at Scum Fest this weekend what records they are looking forward to. Inevitably they told me some pretty good ones like DESTINO FINAL LP (Feral Ward), FIRMEZA-10 second LP, FRAMTID LP, and KRIEGSHOG LP. But I'm sticking to my guns on this one and therefore:

1. CHASO CHANNEL LP

I have already heard a quarter of all the songs and they're really good, so I am sure the LP will be the one I play the most this year. It's like CHAOS CHANNEL but with CHAOTIC DISCORD samples! Amazing.

2. SYSTEM FUCKER / D-CLONE split 7"

SYSTEM FUCKER demo and 7" are amazing. Everything by D-CLONE is amazing. How can this not be amazing?

3. PEOPLE – "Fairy Tale" LP

This would be placed no. 2 if it was not 50% a reissue of the demo by the same name and I have already played it so much already. But I am giving it no. 3 rank because it is 50% new material! PEOPLE is like the SWANKYS never broke up! Note how cool that CHAOS CH and PEOPLE actually sound very different despite the obvious same band influence.

4. HERÄTYS 7"

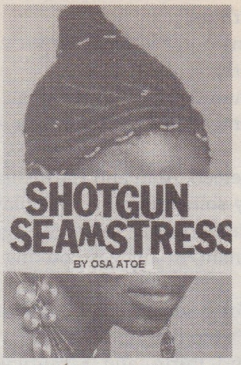
As I say, this is the one contemporary Swedish hardcore band I cannot stop listening to. I hope they're selling a lot of merch at Punk Illegal because I will buy anything and everything.

5. YDINASEETON POHJOLA 7"

YDINASEETON POHJOLA are interviewed for *More Noize* #5 and their new songs are amazing. Like the 7" and the split but with more noise punk style distortion. I asked the guitarist if he had broken his guitar and he said "thank you," ha ha ha. Strange that no one thought to explicitly mix "Finncore" with Italian hardcore before.

***

Be sure to check out (the hard copy) *More Noize* #4 at your earliest convenience. It's a truly inspired wall of text that covers pretty much everything that's going on in the world of raw and noisy punk. I'll be back with more record talk next month. Until then, I hope you remembered to pick up a copy of the GLOOM LP reissue on Crust War!



Everyone's different, so not everyone's going to agree about whether feminism is still relevant or necessary. I mean, if you're a middle-class, college-educated white lady with a sensitive white-guy boyfriend and you feel liberated cuz you have a hyphenated last name, maybe you feel like the coast is clear and that women are no longer oppressed and we don't need feminism anymore. I'm only saying this because I read this blurb about how *Venus* magazine has changed hands and how the new publisher says that feminism is outdated and no longer relevant to their magazine. I'm not an avid *Venus* reader so this decision barely affects me at all, but it did make me want to use the space I have to explain why I think that the idea that feminism is irrelevant is bullshit.

Even though I'm black and gay, I don't really identify as oppressed because I live in the U.S. and I can live where I want and travel around and I have a roof over my head and I've had a lucky life with relatively minor things to complain about. But I don't feel like we still need feminism because I specifically believe that all women are oppressed relative to men (I believe something way more complicated about that relationship that would take a whole other column to explain). I believe that feminism is still relevant because it speaks to the necessity to generally redefine power in our society and globally. If you've read any news lately, how can you not agree that we obviously need a new understanding of power if we want any peace?

When we were starting the Portland chapter of Anarchist People of Color in 2003, I remember sitting in the small group that we comprised, talking about how we wanted to define ourselves. You know, one of those boring activist conversations that seems to never end, but that we were 100% invested in having at the time. I remember talking about how even though I considered myself an anarchist, in my heart I identified with feminism the most and I wanted that to somehow be reflected in our organization. Luette, my fellow organizer (who I recently just got back in touch with: Hey, girl!), expressed that there were aspects of feminism that she just couldn't relate to. She was probably thinking of Andrea Dworkin! I told her I felt the same way about anarchism, picturing Rick Mackin and his ilk in all their manarchist glory. We decided to compromise and define ourselves as an anarcho-feminist group, and since then I've been able to see more and more clearly—in theory and in real life—how these two concepts work together and

help us think of new ways to redistribute and rethink power dynamics. We decided to take the best of both of those worlds and leave the rest behind.

I could use war, or border politics or the U.S. Government as examples of why and how anarcho-feminist ideas can change your community and the world, but I'm going to use a far simpler example. And why not get personal, since the personal is indeed political?

As you may well know, I set up shows in New Orleans for queer, female-fronted, and all-girl bands who pass through town on tour. I started doing it a year ago, and at that point I envisioned it as a collective. I set up a website for networking with bands and individuals and handed the password out to every girl or queer person I knew who was interested. I played music with lots of different women, and did my best to encourage them to start bands, have confidence in their skills, and be involved with putting on shows. I got some help with flyering here and there, but mostly I did everything on my own. After months of operating that way, it inevitably became my "baby." I'm having fun doing it, and the process feels simple enough. I didn't realize until I talked to this fellow lady punk I know named Rachel the other day that a lot of women find the process of setting up a show daunting partly because of the technical aspects of it—for example, running a PA. I've been doing this stuff for a while now, and honestly I forgot that different people are at different stages of learning about it. I had actually begun to assume that most people weren't really interested in the process.

For me, being a feminist means, in part, learning not to put the idea of expertise on a pedestal. (Who knows, maybe this is something DIY culture taught me but I'm crediting it to feminism now. I guess in the end, it's all one and the same to me.) Somehow, along the way I realized that prioritizing technical knowledge over experiential knowledge is patriarchal. It's like how you might have a girl friend who never claims to know how to play music even though you've seen her play guitar in her bedroom a million times. What is that perceived gap between playing music and calling yourself a musician? What does it mean to "know how" to do something? Why isn't the action of doing something evidence that you know how to do it? Why do people, especially women, convince themselves that they don't know how to do things they already do? Why is it perceived that there is only one correct way to do something and that you probably need to take lessons or read a manual in order to learn it? (Is that enough questions for ya?)

Knowledge really is power. Convincing yourself or allowing yourself to be convinced that you don't or can't know things is disempowering. I recently checked out this book from the Iron Rail called *The Power of Feminist Theory: Domination, Resistance, Solidarity* by Amy Allen. In all honesty, it's a little bit dry but not overly academic, so if you're excited about the topic it'll be a pretty easy read. Plus it's pretty short, and it's especially great if you've read this kind of thing before but you need a refresher, because it's pretty straight-to-the-point.

Allen breaks down three ways of defining power: as a resource, as domination, and as empowerment. Feminists who think of power as a resource are basically the ones who think of Hillary Clinton as their savior. They see power as a resource that has been unequally distributed and they think that everything will be fine once women have as much access to power as men. They want more female CEOs and politicians. They don't see anything wrong with the power structure as long as women have an equal place in it. They are dying to wear pantsuits—definitely not going to create the kind of change that I'd like to see in the world.

Feminists who see power as domination define all women as oppressed compared to all men. They wish to end male domination and see power as something defined only by patriarchal violence and the subjugation of women. This conception of power is very black and white and relies on a strict dichotomy, and it doesn't do a very good job of accounting for how race, class, and numerous other factors change the experience of power for men and women. Plus, not everyone's either a man or a woman, right? This idea of power is compelling, but not the real deal.

Then there's the idea of power as empowerment. I was talking to this woman Gia, who helps to run a women-of-color-led space in New Orleans called Gris Gris Lab, and she said she doesn't like the word "empowerment" and prefers to talk about "building power." We didn't get to go in depth about it, but I assume she thinks that saying "empower" can give the idea that the group or individual you're referring to has no power and needs to be given power from an outside source. Obviously that's not what I believe, and I don't think that's what Amy Allen is getting at, either.

Empowerment is just a new way to define power—not as domination, but as "the ability to transform oneself, others, and the world," writes Allen. It means that if you have confidence, skills, or knowledge, you don't lord it over other people or use it to bolster your own ego, you share it. The secret surprise is that you also get it back. It's about seeing power as a nurturing force in the world. Allen writes that the main influence for this idea of empowerment is motherhood (in its most ideal incarnation)—fostering growth, not submission through domination. This type of power benefits everyone, not just women, and it can be applied to a variety of relationships, not just ones between women and men. It also works really well with anti-authoritarian and non-hierarchical ways of organizing ourselves. Power to the people, not over the people, right? This is an old idea that has yet to gain the popularity it deserves.

Tell me, how are these ideas no longer relevant? Until they are widespread and mainstream, they will continue to be relevant.

Anyway, back to my story. I am unintentionally hogging No More Fiction, but I've realized that and I'm ready to turn it over to the people in the interest of empowering queer punks and lady punks to create their own events and spaces in this city. Combining ideas about anti-authoritarianism with feminist ideas about redefining power should be central to the work we do, no matter how small the project. Even if I'm not psyched on putting on yet another folk-punk show, maybe that's an opportunity for another queer punk or lady punk to get practice putting on a show. Of course it's a two way street—people have to be interested and put in work to be involved. We're going to have a skillshare for queers and women this Thursday to share knowledge about the technical aspects of music that people often find mysterious and off-putting. I hope that event marks a change in the way NMF operates in this town from now on.

I want to give a shout out to the Bloody Rag Collective that is putting on shows for bands with women and trans-folks in Chicago. I admire your collective approach, and maybe one of these days we can overcome geography and join forces somehow.

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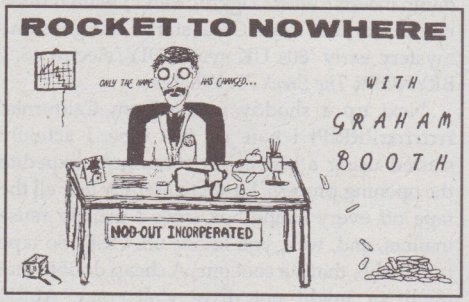
Old columns at shotgunseamstress.blogspot.com

Send your comments & criticisms here: shotgunseamstress@gmail.com



Long time no see! Sorry to go AWOL there for a minute, I've been dealing with some intense shit of late. Thankfully, just because I haven't been out there diggin' in da crates doesn't mean other people haven't been finding shit lately, and man have there been some doozies! The interwebs were aflutter weeks back after someone stumbled onto the unimaginable: scoring rare punk records from the homeless! And not just any punk records, we're talking the ultimate KBD face-melting TAPEWORM *Break My Face* 7" EP!! For all of ten bucks our lucky winner walked away with not only a TAPEWORM EP, but also a NORMALS 45, JETSONS 45, and STANDING WAVES 45 right off the Berkeley pavement. If it was me, I'd've spent the rest of the afternoon looking for the dumpster they came out of.

If TAPEWORM isn't enough for you, Amoeba recently unleashed a warehouse find of punk 45s on the unsuspecting Bay Area public, and a mad dash of sweaty collectors ensued trying to get a crack. Thus far the best score reported seems to be the elusive Italian HC bonzer IMPACT/EU'S ARSE split 7" straight out of the dollar bin. And no, it's *not* the "reissue!" Hovering around those sticky floors is practically a full time job, and I've certainly never found anything that good. I guess I'll be seeing some of you over there.

So in all of this "intense shit" going on, I

spent some time at my parents' house. When I first arrived, I was greeted by a literal mountain of unopened mailers (READ: records). It seems I'd forgotten that a few months back I had my mail sent to my parents' whilst I moved from one city to another. Who knew a few weeks worth of mail could amount to a mountain? (Hi, Heidi!) Anyway, it's been a while since I've had such a critical mass of packages, a veritable Christmas part two over here, so I thought I'd share the fun with y'all once again for another installment of Graham Booth record mail day.

I'm gonna start off with a big padded envelope from France. I know what this is because I've been waiting a few months for a particularly lazy Frog to put it in the mail to me. It's not a huge deal, I actually ordered a couple records offa dude on discogs.com to get some inserts for a record I already have. That would be THE SOFT DRINKS *Pop Stars in their Pyjamas* 7" EP, early '80s synthy/DIY labelmates of Nick Blinko. Just like some of the other Outer Himalayan Records releases, this one came with two elusive mini comic book inserts that I just can't do without. So without further ado I give you THE SOFT DRINKS EP and, hmmm, what's this? What the fuck? Where the fuck are the goddamn inserts? *What?* Ugghh. *Fuck!* I waited three months for this. Wow. Great start. I also got some mystery early '80s UK synth/DIY/electro 45… BRYNGER *The Break* 7". Whatevs.

Next up a shoddy mailer from California. rrrrrrrrrRRRIP! I hate all this tape. I actually started using a box cutter recently to expedite the opening process. I used to literally tear all the tape off every single box since I usually reuse mailers, and, well, you know, uh, OCD. So tape is off. Ahh, that's a cool one. A cheap double that might or might not drive y'all crazy. ALRN *Alternate Learning* 7" EP, 1979 debut from Sacto based art/psych/punk/wave radness who later morphed into GAME THEORY. This has a crazy foldout puzzle cover with a million artsy inserts and shit.

Next one is from DeeTroit. What can this be? Oh shit, I've been curious about this for years… Tremor Records #2: THE IVORIES *Let Me Ride* 7" circa 1978. You always see their third 7" around, kinda meh, but not this one. I've still never seen their first self-released one. Giving it a quick spin, the A-side has saxophone and a '70s "punk" bar band vibe, but whoa, b-Side is pretty damn good in a Detroit rock SONICS RENDEZVOUS BAND style. Guess I need to find that first one.

And what's this? Hmmm, another late arrival, the Datapanik Records triple pack: GAUNT *Jim Motherfucker* 7", *Fielders Choice* 7", and *Pop Song* 7". Honestly I've been playing some '90s catch-up, picking up some of the classics I missed the first time around when they're cheap. At $15 for the three, I figured it was a no-brainer, *Fielders Choice* and *Jim Motherfucker* are pretty much the pinnacle of raw '90s garage punk rock 'n' roll. Now to locate the red vinyl press of *Fielders Choice*…

More from a California address. Time to bust out the box cutter. Ahhh, been wondering about this one. Another Northern California "punk" EP that's sold for money a few times, and not so much other times (this one was $9.99). DENNIS C LEE & THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS *Dada Pop* 7" EP featuring Jane Weems of THE MAGGOTS fame. I've been expecting the worst, so I'm surprised to actually enjoy this. About as "punk" as "Dada Pop" suggests, but if you can deal this is good, catchy, quirky nerd "girl punk." Whatever that means.

Taking it overseas again, here's a shoddy envelope from the UK. I know what this is, too. THE GERMS *Forming* 7". I got this cuz I found a sleeveless copy of the very first TRUE MONO pressing of this LA punk, er, classic? a couple months back and I've been trying to find a first press sleeve and insert to match it up with. And what do you know, this thing looks kinda bogus. The vinyl is def original, but both the sleeve and the insert have some kind of shoddy printing texture, this is either the later third pressing, or someone made their own. More ugghs, time to check out www.breakmyface.com…

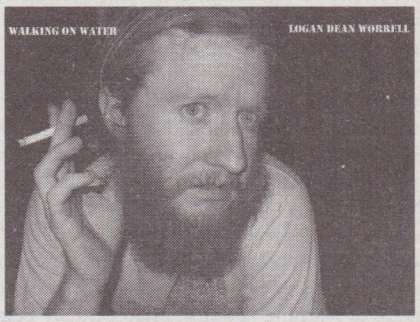
Illinois return address. I don't remember buying anything from Illinois. What could this be? Oh. Whoa. This is one of the weirder come-ups of late. How did an obscure as fuck (super obscure!) Massachusetts record like this make it to Illinois? I'm referring to the infectious '80s pop punk killer THE SIGHS *She's Not the Girl I Used To Know* 7". I waited out my competition for the nice price, I'm sure as hell not paying $100 for this like everybody else. What a weird single, never with a cover, just catchy as fuck. If you're lucky you might still be able to catch the YouTube clip.

And now for a big one. Big meaning large. Like a brick of a box. There must be a bunch of shit in here. What could it be?! Must be a box lot I picked up on the cheap. That's one of my specialties. Mmmmm. Smoky. Like stale cigarettes smoky. Just great. Bound and gagged in a mass of tape and bubble wrap. I'm over the fucking bubble wrap already. Box cutter time. And… we… have… paper… sleeves. How exciting! What the fuck is all this shit? '80s. Not punk as fukk. Just '80s. 1986. 1987. Oof. 1988? Not sure what I was thinking. OK. All I'm coming up with is this, and it doesn't even have a picture sleeve (I think it should)… WOWII *Rock and Roll Singer* 7". This is some pre-punk glam wussy pop shit. Sounds like the '70s, but who knows. Kinda good. Still, I hope this was cheap.

And now for a big flat one. You know, an LP. I get those too. This is some of the shoddier packaging I've seen today, I hope it wasn't expensive. It wasn't! It is fucking rad though. I got another copy of the Canadian Exploito Radness, i.e. THE LONDON ROCKERS *Everything You Want To Hear About New Wave Rock n Roll with the London Rockers* LP. Fake canuck punks doing covers of DICKIES, TUBEWAY ARMY, and PUBLIC IMAGE LIMITED. This is my shit and you can never take that away from me!

OK. Almost done. Just one more big flat one. I vaguely remember having a kinda heavy record getting sent here, hopefully this is it. Here goes… cutting… cutting… tearing… grabbing… more tape on the inside… slice… slice… and… *Eureka! Awesome.* OK, so prolly none of you will give a shit but I'm stoked on this. This is loner bedroom early '80s synth shit from Ohio dude JOHN BENDER. His first LP called *I Don't Remember Now* on his own Record Sluts label. This is some pretty deep, dark, brooding stuff, you'd never imagine from the cover. I mean, whatever. Most of you won't care, but if you think you want to fuck with the whole minimal synth thing, JOHN BENDER is pretty much the pinnacle for me, with a real outsider streak unlike most. Not some boring fluffy synth pop crap. Just super personal weird bedroom vibes committed to wax. All over the interwebs.

That's it. Wow, already?? But it went so fast. I thought I said it was a mountain. Well, it was a mountain. You should've seen it. Of course there were a few things in there even I'm too embarrassed to mention. Really embarrassing. And then there are all the other super secret bonzers I can't tell you about yet. I guess there's always next month.



I try to be a good houseguest. No, fuck that, I try to be a great houseguest. Sure, sometimes you get a little too comfortable with where you're staying and leave your underwear sitting in the kitchen sink. And maybe sometimes you get caught jacking off on the couch when homeboy is trying to watch a movie with his old lady, but on the "reg" I like to think that I can hold my own. My life is one really, really long couch surf. This can be a very satisfying existence for all parties involved if the houseguest can step his game up and be a prince not a pauper.

Be invisible. Being invisible can turn your temporary living situation into a semi- long-term one very easily. It seems like some Scientology bullshit, but I swear to god it works. Once you get into your new digs, scan the room for a place to store your giant ugly duffel bag. No, no, no, not the open space in the middle of the living room. Go for the spot hidden underneath the kitchen table that is coved in record mailers. You know, the one that has never actually been used for its intended purpose. Shove it to the back of the wall, and be sure that as soon as you're done with whatever the fuck it is that your doing you put it back where it came from. Out of sight, out of mind. There's nothing more annoying then some dickhead crashing on your couch for a goddamn month and every time you try to walk to the pisser at 4am, homeboy's goddamn dirty laundry gets in the way and next thing you know you're face down in the litter box. Has happened. Shit sucks.

Clean up after everybody. Yes everybody, not just yourself. Most motherfuckers hate doing

dishes and cleaning bathrooms (and frankly, I can't blame 'em). People will always be more inclined to let you stay if you consistently do all the mundane bullshit they hate doing. This means clean the toilet, wash the goddamn dishes, and, for god sakes, take out the fucking trash. Make sure not to only repair that damage that you caused. Go the extra mile and pick up the whole house's shit. It's not rocket science, it's good housekeeping, baby. Bam.

Don't break the rules. Hey, I fucking hate rules. However, sometimes you gotta pay the cost to be the boss. If some goddamn idiot your buddy met on Craigslist while looking for a SWF to live with doesn't want ya to smoke in the house, don't. If the ladies at the LGBT compound don't allow dogs (which would never happen), just leave the little shit-roller outside. And for god sakes don't eat other people's food, no matter how loaded you are or how much it pisses you off when some asshole writes their name on a to-go box of leftover shitty Chinese food (which they will probably never eat anyway). Also, if you're dead set on smoking in the house, do it in the bathroom with an open window, and preferably with a toilet paper roll filled with fabric softener, high school style.

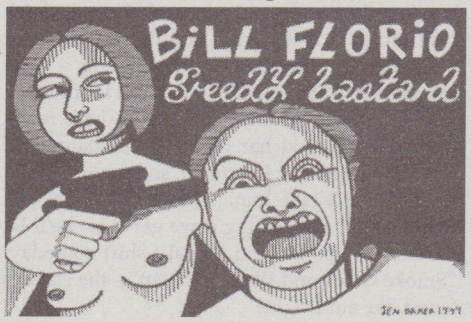
Buy some goddamn food for the goddamn house. Don't be a dick, buy some shit. Fucking toilet paper, fucking cereal, fucking ramen, whatever. Joe Blow will be a lot less inclined to kick you to the curb if he has his stupid thin lips wrapped around a free bottle of Pellegrino. All compliments of whatever food stamp provider of your choice.

Don't sit on the couch all day watching TV. It's not your couch and, believe it or not, someone who actually pays rent might want to sit and chill after a long day at work. People really get uptight when you do that. I learned the hard way. Not to mention that I un-Tivo-ed all his programs, but that was just because he was a dick. Fight fire with fire. Naw mean?

I'm really not trying to come across as a know-it-all. Frankly, all the tutelage I can give is only because I have fucked up literally all of these things. I've gotten caught throwing bones in a buddy's bed that was letting me stay on his couch. I once took a bite out of a block of cheese while wasted and put it back in the fridge. Lord knows I've urinated on more then my fair share of couches. I've broken windows and, most recently, spilled tattoo ink all over my friend's bed and put a pillow over it in hopes to cover my tracks. Little did I know that now the pillow would be covered in ink as well, and I was just gonna end up leading a Hansel-and-Gretel-esque trail back to my pallet on the floor. Man, looking back, a lot of these involve beds. I should really stay the fuck out of other people's rooms.

A few weeks ago a bunch of buddies and I were in Dallas for a gig. Unfortunately, that's where I'm from, and it being Memorial Day and all I figured that I'd give my folks a buzz and try to get some backyard family time in while simultaneously introducing them to the clique. My parents' place is pretty cramped, so we high-tailed it to my sister's place in Dallas proper. Plus, she's got a pool. If you were to put me and my sister in a room, you would not believe we are related. She is the best, though, and has taken all the pressure off me to become financially successful. Anyway, back to the point. Me and a gang of about twenty people showed up, drank a bunch of beer, and swam for hours. However, as soon as we left in the morning the place looked like we had never been there. That's what I'm talking about, friends. Keep yo shit clean.

Send bullshit to ldworrell@gmail.com



I was thinking about Buster Poindexter the other day. Not because I feel this character is something worthwhile—in fact, I probably loathe Buster more than anyone, as that stupid song appears in almost every wedding and bar mitzvah video I edited for the past umpteen years. Crap, I had no idea umpteen is a word in the dictionary, Word just allowed it. It also allowed mitzvah, while all along I assumed Microsoft was anti-semetic. Ok, it didn't allow the word anti-semetic, guess I was correct!

Where was I? Oh, David Johansen. I don't really have a lot to say about him, and I suppose you could look at Buster P in one of two ways. In one way, you could see it as someone doing something that's much more sellable in the '80s than the New York Dolls were in the '70s, an easy way to easy money through an almost offensive cartoon-like musical novelty act. After fifteen-plus years of being broke yet iconic, it's time to take your connections and remake yourself into something that could appear in a TV sitcom or play at a bar mitzvah. In another way, you could see it as doing something so completely different that it's almost heroic how he could shed his former self and start something totally new. The point being, anyone can be convinced (or convince oneself) that you've not given up, you just got bored and have matured, etc., etc.

Well, maybe you could argue for number two if the guy didn't then go country, and then go back to being a New York Doll when it suddenly became something that could earn more money, for example getting paid five figures for a thirty-minute gig. On the other hand, my standard answer for David is that everything's relative, he's from Staten Island, and he's a living legend—at least when it comes to islands covered in landfill.

What I'm writing about here is not Buster, but those Busters around us. I'm sure you all can think of dozens of people that hung out, collected records, went to shows, and then one day suddenly disappeared and became something else, or got into hanging out somewhere and maybe collecting something-or-another over there, wherever that is. To tell you the truth, there's nothing wrong with it. It's just how some people operate: they do something very intensely for a certain amount of time, get burned out, and do something else intensely for another amount of time. Personally, I find this a little weird, because there are people involved and I like to think that people's bonds and relationships should supersede the actual activities that brought people together. Most of the people I have been involved around are probably more passing acquaintances and casual friends who sort of come and go. I also have had a lot of very deep moments of friendship with people, and I find it a bit weird when one of these people just up and disappears one day, only to return as a friend request on Facebook ten years later. I'm not going to go as far as saying it hurts me, but I think it's not something I would personally choose to do.

But maybe I would. I'm going to make a list of reasons I can think of which I suspect might be the reasons I don't see some of my old friends, and I'm going to see how I think I would act under the same circumstances.

Boredom: I think some people are involved with music in a very limited way, be it record collecting, playing in a band, writing a zine, or being with a certain crowd they can relate to.

I feel like I've done all of these things at the same time, and when one thing gets stagnant, I have four or five other things to focus on. Perhaps if, for instance, I was in a band right away, only went to shows when my band was playing, and only listened to music of bands that my band played with. The band breaks up and I'm lost, maybe I find happiness playing some other type of music, maybe a new sports bar opens up on the corner and it's just so much easier to sit around and drink and bet on the game.

Love: A lot of people I know who have suddenly disappeared have done so because they met a guy or a girl who isn't into music, or isn't into going to shows, etc., etc.… They get married or they find new things that both their partner and themselves like and live happily ever after.

I'm really happy that I'm with a person who respects my likes and dislikes; personally, I feel this is important to a relationship, and giving up things you love because your significant other isn't really into it probably causes more bad feelings and resentment than it's worth. I know a few people who sort of appear and disappear depending on who they're dating or not dating at the moment.

Work/Age/Maturity/College: I'm too old, I have to keep focused on this, that, etc.…

I feel that if someone views himself or herself going to shows and getting into music as something they did just because it was the thing to do at the time, then they probably really weren't into it, and they probably can't be all that comfortable or happy with whatever they've moved on to later on. Say "hello," mid-life crisis—it's coming to a loser near you!

Drug/Alcohol Problem: You get clean, and

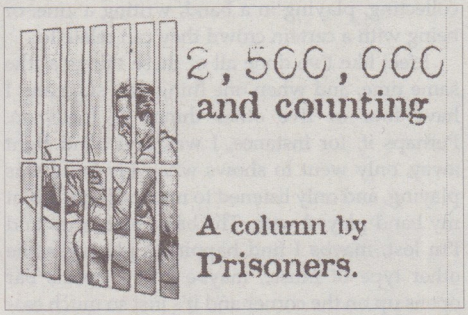
you have to remove things that influenced this behavior.

I have to support people that are trying to better themselves; while I personally don't partake in any of this, I can't expect others to have control over themselves and I respect whatever they need to do to stay clean and sober.

It's not like the old days: That crap died in [insert year here].

Shit yeah it's not! While there's always something sad about things changing, there's also something to say for people not living in the past. If you're willing to keep your eyes and ears open there's always something really awesome going on. All you have to do is stop complaining about how things used to be—the fact is there were just as many people complaining then.

This isn't a perfect world, and this isn't Disneyland. If things aren't as fun as they were a few years back, that's no reason to go dress like Ricky Ricardo, that's no reason to pull that pair of spike heels out of the closet from 1974. If you contributed so much to what was fun and good when you were 19, you could and should be able to do so now. If not, maybe it's time to do something else, or perhaps trade your valuable record collection for some good therapy. Hey, if you're from Staten Island, keep on truckin' You're cool as shit with your four kids helping you sell NYHC records on eBay. Everything's relative.



When Mariam encouraged me to submit a guest column, I was excited, as well as stymied. I was sort of hoping she would suggest a topic or theme or something, but the only requirements given me were "2000 words or less… and that's it!" At first, I thought I would do like a "Shoplifting from Walmart for Fun and Profit"-type thing, where I would give step-by-step instructions on how to use a welder's magnet or make a "magic bag" in order to disable Walmart security alarms, as well as a few other successful techniques I've picked up over the years. While this column would have written itself, in the end I decided against it for two reasons. The first is that a correctional officer reads all of my outgoing mail before it leaves the facility, and I didn't want to implicate myself (or anyone else) should I have any pending charges out there which I am not aware of. The second reason I decided against it is that I questioned how willing the average reader/militant anarchist would be to take shoplifting advice from a dude sitting in prison on commercial burglary charges. I mean, I myself might be hesitant to take instruction from, say, Phil Spector on how to get away with shooting your girlfriend in a coke-fueled berserker rampage—know what I mean? Besides, the average reader probably wouldn't care. The average militant anarchist probably already knows how you make a magic bag. So scratch that idea.

Next, I toyed with the idea of writing a humorous mock scene report for C-Yard. While I still think this is a great concept, I abandoned it for lack of material. Basically, the "scene" consists of me and this black metal kid who lives upstairs, and that's it. There are no shows, but you can often find me singing old Bad Religion songs as I play Scrabble most nights of the week, between the hours of 10 p.m. and 12 a.m.—quick side note: I bet Greg Graffin is great at Scrabble… remember that song "The Henchman"? Dang. That song has a lot of fancy words… Also, I know black metal isn't really punk, but this kid has heard of Discharge and he's down with Pig Destroyer, so I figure, "What the hell, we'll take him!" I mean, any port in a storm, right? I'm hoping if we get close he'll let me borrow his Morbid Angel t-shirt someday! "Smoke Crack and Worship Satan"—the classics never die, am I right?

The third idea I kicked around was to do like a serious exposé on the problem of racism behind bars. In the end I decided against it, because I'm sure the topic has been handled many times already, probably way better that I am capable of doing. But for the record, just in case there is anyone out there who isn't aware: prisons are racist, sexist, and homophobic, just like "regular" society only worse. The state's role in relation to this racism vacillates between tacit approval and overt encouragement. The issue is thorny and complicated, but basically as long as we, the inmates, are busy stabbing each other over bullshit racial politics, we won't be uniting to tear the roof of this motherfucker, and the state knows it. Before moving along, I feel compelled to mention this Nazi skinhead I saw the other day who had an anarchy sign tattooed on one knee and a swastika tattooed on the other. I tried to think about exactly what he was trying to say and smoke started coming out of my ears—talk about conflicting ontologies! Quick side note: "conflicting ontologies" is my favorite Bad Religion song. It goes to show that no matter where you are, racism is bred of ignorance, confusion, and fear, but it's two-thousand-fucking-ten and everyone already knew this, right?

Anyway, having vetoed my first three topics, I eventually decided to focus on some of the similarities between punk culture and prison culture, but before I do that, I'd like to discuss exactly what it means to be a punk in prison. First of all, if someone in the free world were to call me a punk, I would be just fine with it (most days, at least). While I try not to get caught up in the fashion show bullshit, I have been known to sew a patch or two, and I do feel comfortable wearing my prototypical "rocker" gear, just as I have done since I stumbled blindly into this scene for better of worse, sometime circa 1991. Accordingly, were a person to approach me on the street and accuse me of being a punk, I might respond by saying "no shit" or going "fuck yeah" and doing "the claw," depending on what types of drugs I happen to be on. (Do people still do "the claw"?) In here, however, the word "punk" has a different connotation—that of a submissive partner in a homosexual sex act. For some reason, this is considered the penultimate prison insult (just behind "bitch"), so if someone in here were to accuse me of being a punk, I would be expected to challenge them to fisticuffs, thereby defending my honor and whatnot. I'm not saying I buy into this bullshit, I'm just saying that would be the expectation

One of the interesting things about being a punk rocker in prison is existing in a world sans fashion. That is, in here we all wear the same outfit, regardless of what kind of music we listen to or what class we belong to. It's kind of liberating, and causes me to ponder what it means to be a "punk on the inside" and try and live my life accordingly. The less time one has to spend worrying about whether anyone will notice one bought one's wallet at Hot Topic or whether or not it is still fashionable to be a fan of Against Me!, the more time one has to think about such things. Although I haven't figured it out exactly, I know there's more to it than a particular aesthetic sensibility. Whether it's my politics or my attitude or something else entirely, I am always amazed at how people have me pegged as a punker after just barely getting to know me.

Now, the first thing that prison culture has in common with punk culture that I'd like to discuss is the nickname thing. Just like in the punk scene, everybody in prison has a nickname. For instance, mine is "Frankenstein." I wish I could say that people call me Frankenstein because they perceive that I am a misunderstood and soulless monster cast into an uncaring world I do not understand, stumbling around in a hamfisted attempt to be accepted, only to be driven away by an angry mob replete with pitchforks and torches. However, this is not the case. It's either because I have a giant tattoo of Frankenstein on my right forearm, or that seventeen years of hard drug abuse and street living have left me bearing a striking resemblance to Frankenstein. Maybe it's both. For the record, when I first got to prison I tried to tell everyone that my name was "Ubauhac," which is short for "Ultimate Bad Ass of the Universe with a Huge Cock," but for some reason it didn't stick. Whatever. I guess "Frankenstein" is cool.

The second trend common to both convicts and punks is body modification and adornment. You probably already knew that homemade tattoos abound in prison; popular motifs include skulls, demons, flames, naked women, and neighborhoods. The quality of work varies from terrible to amazing. It doesn't end with tattoos, though; people are splitting their tongues, piercing their lips or nipples, etc. The latest thing I noticed is genital mutilation. Guys are slicing holes in their cocks and cramming broken chess pieces, marbles, and other stuff beneath the skin and allowing it to heal. Allegedly, this is done to enhance the sexual experience for the partner. Now, I'm not Sigmund Freud, but it seems more likely to me that such behavior stems from profound boredom coupled with deep-seated feelings of sexual inadequacy and self-hatred. Whatever the motivation, the other day I saw a

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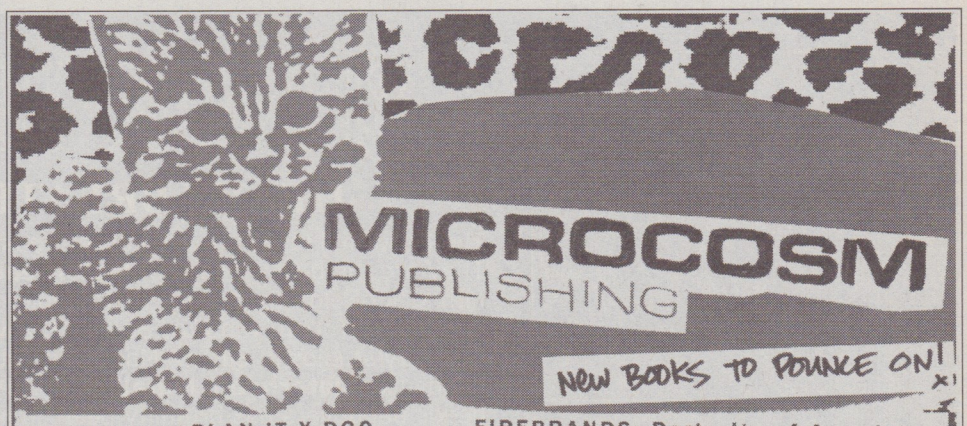

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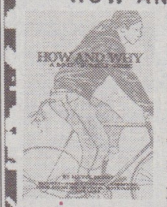

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guy in the bathroom trying to pop an air bubble which had developed in his cock after one of these DIY implants went horribly awry. He was having another guy poke it with a needle while he attempted to squeeze out the air. If that's not punk rock, I don't know what is.

Aside from body "art" like this, prison also has a strong DIY work ethic. The absence of money and access has created a barter economy where craft is currency. People make rings out of string. They make jewelry boxes out of chip bags. They make paint out of Kool-Aid. They make crack pipes out of chicken bones. One is limited only by one's imagination. Just as there are jailhouse lawyers, there are jailhouse portrait artists, poets, tailors, and artisans of every kind.

In closing, I'd like to briefly touch on the phenomenon of the "spread." See, in the Bay Area, you have vegan potlucks. In prison, we have spreads. Basically a spread is a meal/event in which everyone contributes a few pre-packaged junk food items purchased from commissary—i.e. Top Ramen, Cheetos, beans, etc. What you do is throw all the soups and chips and whatever into a trash bag, pour hot water on it, mix, and eat. Spreads are popular because they are not just something to eat, they are something to do, as well as being a community event and gathering. The spread is decidedly not vegan, and it probably doesn't sound very appetizing either. You'll have to trust me, it tastes good. For a good spread recipe, or to learn how to make a magic bag, send me an e-mail some time after July 12th. Don't write me in here, I'll be free by then.

Joshua Livingroom
May 1st, 2010
Northern Kern State Prison, C Yard
Email: hautecarl@gmail.com

You can stubbornly avoid resetting the clock on your VCR after a power cut, but the battery-powered clock on the kitchen wall ticks on resolutely. The idea of freezing time at a certain point in our lives has such allure; during those golden years of teenage freedom, or perhaps at that elated moment when our team scored the winning goal at the final whistle to bring home the European Cup. In case you can't guess, I've been indulging in bouts of nostalgia lately. Partially brought on by an impending birthday, partly from looking at old photos posted on the Internet, and partly from spending time reminiscing with my oldest friend. If I could once again recapture the feeling of that first band practice in a garden shed, or that first road trip with friends to a BMX contest in England. How about that first time I saw Snuff and Leatherface, or my first trip to San Francisco and the pilgrimage I made to *Maximumrocknroll* magazine, meeting the legendary Tim Yohannan for the first time?

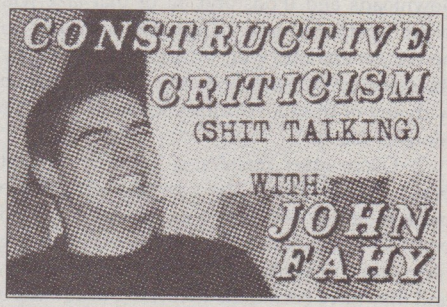
I spent my youth without much thought for the future. When prospective employers or representatives of state oppression unearthed that hoary old chestnut about where I saw myself in five years, I could only lie and make up something that I thought they'd want to hear, something that would result in some kind of income-producing labor or at the very least a guarantee of continued dole money. I made choices by not choosing, by following whatever path seemed most interesting at the time. Not that I never took any risks or anything, but I've managed to be pretty lucky so far. When I moved to San Francisco in 1995 I never imagined I'd still be here fifteen years later, but I didn't have an alternative in mind either. And so here I am. Could be a lot worse. I'm living many peoples' dreams, I suppose. I could be drinking away my redundancy money from a long-gone factory job, or wearing the tinfoil cloak of smack addiction, or lying dead in a gutter, killed by hyper-aggressive Burberry neds. Perhaps that's overly dramatic; it's not like the only options open to me were a) move to America or b) fail at life. But the option to move to the US seemed the best thing at the time, and it's worked out okay so far.

Of course, when I look back through the green-tinted bottom of the Buckfast bottle of nostalgia I don't want to freeze time completely; there are a few changes I'd like to make… I may never have to jump in a customized DeLorean and go back to the late '60s to make sure that my parents actually get together, but I would certainly love to go back and make a few tactical haircut recommendations to my tonsorially experimental teenage self.

The aforementioned old friend, Sandy (who has enjoyed guest appearances in this column many times before), lives in Austin, Texas. So as well as our shared upbringing dodging gangsters and casuals in a small former mining village in the west of Scotland, we have the common experience of navigating life as Scots in America. We talked about this a lot during my recent trip to Austin. It's funny, I don't think either of us ever articulated a desire to live in the States when we were younger; it was unspoken but there was an unmistakable draw, fuelled by BMX and skate magazines, as well as American punk records and zines. I think I mentioned in an earlier column about how we imagined life in the US to be one endless sunset pool session, like an infinite JFA ad from *Thrasher*. I wish I was still that naive and hopeful, but many years have gone by since those days and at times it definitely seems like the negative aspects of life can get the upper hand on the positive. I mentioned an upcoming birthday earlier in this column, and indeed, by the time this sees print I'll have turned the ripe old age of 40. I once told myself I'd stop doing this column when I hit that age. I felt like there were enough old men dictating the ins and outs of punk rock on the pages of *Maximumrocknroll*. However, I only just got back into doing the column after a self-imposed hiatus brought on by issues in my personal life. I don't feel quite ready to throw in the towel just yet. Plus, given the demographic makeup of our esteemed and benevolent leadership cadre, it's been a long time since the direction of the magazine rested solely in the hands of grey-haired white men. But I promise not to turn my column into yet another monthly orgy of nostalgic self-absorption. In these last throes of my thirties I have continued to experience new "firsts" to add to those listed in the first paragraph: first, after years of BMX riding, I finally mountain biked for the first time in my life on some technical single track, one balmy sunset evening in an area of Austin green belt. I'd ignored mountain biking for years (even though I live only a few miles from Marin, where the sport arguably started) but it was a lot of fun, if hard work: my own fault for going out for the first time with a couple of hard-charging seasoned vets. Secondly, despite being a fan of their records, I never had the chance to see early '90s New York hardcore legends Rorschach live. I finally rectified this in Austin and they were even louder and heavier than their recorded output. Getting to see them was better than I could have imagined.

Okay, so seeing the reunited Rorschach had a certain nostalgia factor to it, but I saw many current bands that I'm excited about in Austin too, many of them for the first time. Some highlights for me included Give and Lion of Judah from DC, Brilliant Colors, Grass Widow, Wild Thing, the Young Offenders of course, Arctic Flowers, and the Marked Men. Notice how many of those bands are from the Bay Area too: there's a particularly vibrant scene here right now with an amazing variety of bands. Hopefully *MRR* will have our "locals only" Bay Area comp LP out fairly soon with a sampling of what's been going on around here.

I suppose the purpose of this column is to say, OK, I'm going to be 40 soon, and despite maturing and growing up in a lot of ways, I'm determined to keep racking up "firsts." Perhaps these days I do live my life with a thought to the future, and I'm always happy to reminisce about the happy times of the past, but I do have both feet firmly planted in the here and now. So let's have it.



Shit Is Bogus. Allow Me To Explain.

I write this column while sitting in my home in full-blown douchebag mode; I have not had any sleep and am wearing but a towel (settle down) because I have been too inept to launder my clothes before the point of desperation. Because of this I am cranky, and my rambling,

complaining bullshit will be stupider than usual and, furthermore, all over the map. Enjoy.

1. First off, I hate the fucking "Monster Mash." Anyone who knows me will attest that for years I have claimed that this is the most insulting piece of popular music ever written. Nothing makes me want to jump out of a fucking window more than hearing "I was working in the lab late one night…" Nothing says "utter catastrophe" quite like the chorus of this most insipid tune. I have come to many people with the proposition that they could not think long or off-hand of a worse song ever created. People would come back with shit like, "Oh, what about Bob Dylan's Christmas album?" but that shit doesn't count. I'm sure there are worse pieces of music out there—like any I.C.P. song, for instance—but I'm talking strictly about songs that everyone knows. Can you think of one? In all the years I have made this claim, I have not even heard of a decent runner-up.

It seems like the during the time period this song was number one on the Billboard charts (can you fucking fathom that?)—1962—the more a performer would behave like a thundering dickhead, the more the audience went apeshit over their schtick. Utter insanity. This is an awfully regrettable time, and I blame the navel-gazing, safe, innocent American public of 1962 for the popularization of the aforementioned woeful song, which is bereft of any fucking value whatsoever. Nostalgia for this same era ten years later would provide what I believe to be a decent number two to the "Mash": ELTON JOHN'S "Crocodile Rock." This was number one (again, fucking unconscionable) in 1972, and was supposed to hearken back longingly for this profoundly distasteful time in American rock 'n' roll music. How the producer on hand recorded to tape the portion of the song that goes, "LAAAAAAA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA" is, again, a matter of humans being without couth or conscience. Should you hear this fucking war crime of a song, swallow your cyanide tablet before it reaches this point. You'll want to chamber a round while Elton sings such lyrics as "Croc rockin' is out of sight"—but the "LAAAAAAA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA" shit will definitely seal the deal and provoke an immediate checkout.

I hope that somehow the new culture of downloads and iPods and all of that jazz will cover up these kinds of musical atrocities so newer generations will not have to live under the onslaught of such horseshit. If you disagree with any of the above, fuck you, and fuck "The Monster Mash."

2. On to other matters: is there any decent pop punk anymore? The vast majority of pop punk today seems very clean, lovely, trite, and boring. I'm completely tired of generic love song lyrics; they're neither charming nor intelligent, and they have been done to fucking death. Get a new topic. Sometimes a good song can remedy this—but where are the good songs? I heard a demo, sent to me by the band TRENCHFOOT from St. Louis, which seemed to escape the sterile pop punk ghetto and get a little dirty-sounding while staying catchy. I think this is the main problem; there is not enough punk in pop punk these days. All the bands seem to be on sketchy labels that are "upwardly mobile" because such labels have clean cookie-cutter acts that the Big Music Biz has shown interest in before. Maybe that's the reason everything seems so shitty in this realm. How many of these bands can you look at and not see a future SUM 41 or whatever the fuck? The resurrection of this genre's legitimacy will have to be through getting it a little rough around the edges again. Bad equipment helps.

3. This brings me to my next point: knowing anything about band equipment is not punk. Don't ask me what kind of head I play through, or what kind of bass or guitar I play—because I'm a punk to my fucking tits and I don't know a goddamn thing about that shit. Equipment discussion is so bogus it hurts. Here's an example of unacceptable equipment talk: "This VCRX82 I have has way more low end, sometimes I masturbate atop it." Here's an example of acceptable equipment talk: "I like this guitar because it goes "WAHHHHH-WAHWAHWAHWAHWAHHH-HHHH." That's all you're allowed. Don't mention any brand names or model numbers. I blame the influx of metalcore in the late '90s—another deeply regrettable time in music history best soon forgotten—for this kind of jerkoff discussion permeating traditional punk conversation and brazenly solidifying itself as a legitimate topic.

4. Before I leave you, I'm going to try to redeem myself by actually talking about something that is legit and doesn't waste your time: new good music. I received a test pressing of the new CLOUD RAT LP and it is something fierce. I'm going to nab *Seven Inches to Freedom* zine-honcho Joe Lachut's description to a friend and repeat that CLOUD RAT sound like a modern-day version of also-Michiganers OTTAWA. This record isn't quite as relentlessly fast as the OTTAWA split LP—there's some headbanging numbers thrown in there—but like OTTAWA, there are a small amount of BORN AGAINST-ish noisy parts here and there and there is the same blasting, utter viciousness and fury on hand. This record is available from www.ifbrecords.com.

I received a compilation tape some time ago from Tick Tock Records out of New York, simply called *Tick Tock Mixtape #1*. There are a few very noteworthy tracks on here from bands I've been meaning to check out, including THANK GOD, who I'm told are pretty much GUYANA PUNCH LINE minus Chris Bickel. Their track sounds like a continuation of that kind of weirdness and is excellent. BIG & TALL put out some noise rock mess that I intend to hunt down more of, while SMALL POX and BEAUTY APES each give moody, noisy numbers that rule. Again, keep your eyes peeled for these bands. Go to www.ticktockrecords.com to purchase or download this comp.

CIVILIZATION, from Jacksonville, Florida, have been at it a while now and their latest offering, a self-titled LP, is their best work yet. This starts as raging, heavy, relentlessly charging sonic blasts right up until the dirgey breaks, where suddenly a bong will appear, regardless of your location. Check out www.deadtankdistro.com to procure yourself a copy. I don't think this completely captures the impact that the band has live, but this is a great record all the way through with some really catchy, memorable tunes—a non-stop headbanger.

I got a demo in the mail two days ago from New York's brand new CERVIX, and while the sound quality could be better, this rages. The best way I can think to describe this is totally raw punk rock with terrifying vocals. There is some time to leave the circle pit and let your head do some banging, either way you're getting destroyed by the crust in your speakers. The vocals are reverb-laden shrieks of terror that keep things interesting musically while also probing a little deeper than the usual punk rock fare lyrically. This is a damn good demo, hope they record something else soon. Get yourself a copy with a couple of bucks if there's any left: Cervix / PO Box 30 / New York, NY / 10276 / USA.

That's it for this month. I'm off to Europe to get culture-fied.

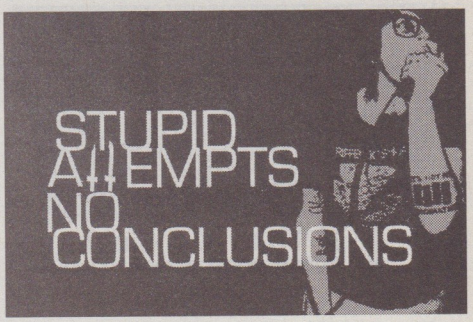
Fuck band equipment discussion. Fuck bogus-ass pop punk. Fuck the goddamn "Monster Mash." I'm out.

ENDNOTES:

1.Please keep sending the mixtapes and demo tapes; I need more! Or simply write me: John Fahy / 15011 Lakeside View Drive / Apt. 2402 / Fort Myers, FL / 33919 / USA or fahy_john@hotmail.com

2. Seriously, fuck "The Monster Mash."

3. Aside from the TRENCHFOOT demo, the SLOANE PETERSON single on Art Of The Underground Records is one of the best pop punk records I've heard in some time—top-notch songwriting. Check out artoftheunderground.com to see if any are left.



In the bathroom. I want to go to bed, but I'm making my boyfriend wax my bleeding armpits with some Nair strips, the ones you heat up with your hands. I spent probably half an hour at Sobey's checking my options. Microwavable strips? Nah, don't have a microwave. On principle. What a fucking paradox. "Are you ready?" he asks. "No." He rips a strip down. "Fuck!"

I'm doing this because I'm taking a weekend aquatics fitness instructor's course, which I'm taking because I want do a lady-fronted '80s-pop-themed aquafit course for other chubby ladies at the community center. Maybe that's punk, but probably not. Waxing my armpits certainly is not punk—that's some patriarchy shit right there. I don't give a fuck if you are a girl

who gets rid of her body hair, that's cool. Some dudes like to do that too. What the fuck ever. But going through this shit because I don't want my armpit hair to be a topic of conversation with some dance instructor assholes I'm about to spend the weekend with? Not punk.

It looks fucking stupid. I hate the world but I live in it. Of course we did a shitty job, we're punks not estheticians or fucking whatever. Close up there's stubble. I check it out in the mirror a few feet away. It looks "clean," but it looks fucking stupid. Even babies have armpit hair, little blonde ones.

My armpit looks like a bruise.

It's like my two-year anniversary of writing this column, and I'd really like to embrace this whole "bible of punk" thing I've been hearing around, usually in voices that sound like sneers. It's about time I let the word of punk-god come through me. Here we go:

My favorite thing lately is noticing people whose interests in punk have waned but they still need to call all their new interests punk. Whatever. Skipping the all-ages show because you want to stay home and watch *Lost* (or whatever fad show that keeps you glued to the wireless connection) at your mom's house while eating Pringles Lights isn't punk. It's called being a normal person who has the conventional standards of embracing the isolation of nuclear family and succumbing themselves to exhaustion and crap food.

Folk bands playing Mennonite hymns? Not punk. Nope. Not even if it's a living room show. Sure, I think it's awesome that other non-punk people share my values of non-establishment music venues. Seriously, I might even see you at the show. But if your "fast music" phase is over, go gently into that good night and give me a fucking break and shut up.

Admittedly, lots of my shit isn't punk. This month I took driving lessons and passed my road test, finally. That's not punk, that's paying too much money for a card of legitimacy in the eyes of the man. Then there's vehicle registration. Then there's car insurance. I heard that insurance companies are the richest in the world. Fuck that. Un-punk. I'm getting a pay raise, congratulations. Not punk. The whole getting-rid-of-my-armpit-hair thing I just covered, God. Get me a fucking fake hybrid eco car already.

Then there are the degrees of punk. Yes, flying to Philadelphia in August to see Kid Dynamite is a little punk, especially if punk is your passion and you have Kid Dynamite lyrics stick-and-poked across your wrist, matching with your best friend from 2002, but every little local scene going on hiatus during that time is a little not punk. The hyper-monoculture of punk? Not punk. *MRR*? Totally fucking punk!!! Relying on *MRR* to figure out what's punk and happening when there's little kids banging away at guitars within a ten-mile radius? Not punk.

My armpits are itchy. Rubbing stubble. It's like being a little kid again. My mom spent so much time on me—I cried every time she brushed my hair and I couldn't tell the difference after. All that weird lace in hot Ontario summers at church. I think my brothers got to wear some khakis and called it a Sunday outfit. Fuck that.

See how defensive I am? I'm always fucking defensive. Physical uncomfortableness isn't just about being female though. That's also part of punk. My ears are ringing and aching. We're recording our demo off the floor, which takes forever because my basement has the worst acoustics, but we do it here because that's how we do things. Foam hangs from the heat pipes, in between the drums and guitar amp. More foam. More volume. There's an echo we're trying to erase. After we do that, I do my own separate extra guitar tracks over it.

"Why are you doing that?" The drummer of my band, Jeff, is an old man—you know, like 34. He's appalled that things are different now than how he did them at one time, although we don't have the capabilities to do things how he believes are right. All those dudes with four-tracks from the '90s in this city have disappeared, so we get our 19-year-old friends with laptops and some software called Audacity, a name Jeff probably thinks is apt. This will be released on a cassette. "Why?" he's been crying. "Why are we recording digitally then putting it on a analog format??" There's no logical answer besides convenience and preference.

"Because you always do two guitar tracks."

"Since when? Why don't we just have two guitarists then?"

"We don't need a fucking second guitarist."

For reals, the reason why I think that everyone does two guitar tracks is because in my old band our male guitarist did two guitar tracks. He just did. He was a little bossy, but I liked how the guitars sounded in those recordings so I'm rolling with this. He had an idea about how things should sound and it worked out. I have an idea about how things should sound, am I allowed to go with it? His ideas were probably based on other dudes, why am I self-conscious about admitting that I learned some tidbits of knowledge from a dude?

I make up something up about the sound and mics and use the phrase "beef up." I don't know, I don't know anything about recording. I'm faking it. Fuck that, it's punk and we're all faking it. This is about all of us figuring things out ourselves and doing the best with the little and few resources we have. It's called economic independence or something. But I'm figuring out that because I'm a girl I always have to tell everyone I'm faking it. I have to have a good reason to explain why I might not be as knowledgeable or as good or as ripping or as loud or as fast or as clean or as tight or as fucking everything as everyone else, just in case I might be promoting some kind of stereotype about subpar female musicians.

Because if we put out a shitty demo, it's not just one of a million shitty punk demos, it's a demo that's shitty because a girl played guitar. If we get a second guitarist it's probably gonna be a dude, and people will think he writes the songs, unless they think we suck, in which case I'll be blamed. It's getting fucking old. I'm angry already. I'm already mad. We're all mad, why do I have to fucking spell out why I'm extra mad, why I'm mad at you and you and you and mostly me for letting myself get swallowed up by all this shit? Why can't I just be shitty like everyone else?

I keep listening. "Another track." Another listen. "I'll do another one, on top." And then more and then more and then more. I need to prove something. I don't want to admit that, in case you hear it and remember reading this and think, "That's proving something?" My ears are bleeding. They look like a bruise.

ALL FOREIGN JUNK

A couple of weeks back, a friend of mine returned from a trip to Hong Kong where he managed to score a pile of *Mad* magazines from the 1960s and 1970s, the golden age of a magazine that directly informed my interest in punk music. Howling high, blasting garage records, and '70s punk, we spent a couple hours flicking through the yellowing pages for moments of purity, arguing over the merits of the artist, debating exactly when it went to shit. I think punk made *Mad* go to shit, personally, but that's conjecture for another time.

The topic of conversation went from *Mad* and careened to punk when I made my opinion known, and then straight to punk mags, like the one you're reading now, when wanting to see how punks reacted to themselves in print. Said friend had one exposure to *MRR*, flicked through it, read two columns (one by yours truly) demanding reader input, and threw it down, disgusted. Said friend: "who wants to read something that abuses you for being a reader?!" Gut reaction: what the fuck is punk if not music that abuses you for being the kind of lousy slug that would listen to it?!

Upon reflecting, I realized that it's not too often that punk writing goes under the critical scope, being that half the time punk writers are punks first and writers second, so the reader accustomed to the language of punk will take such writing as a given. The common defense against criticism against poor writing in punk mags/fanzines is something like, "if you think you can do better, than do it." This stinks of schoolyard churlishness, and you can picture the exact kind of nerd that would make such an insecure statement in a whining, nasally tone. It obviously lacks exactly the energy of punk that makes you want to read about it in the first place, and basically explains 90% of what happened to hardcore in the 1990s. If THE DAMNED had responded to similar criticism with this kind of slobbery, we'd never have wanted to hear them in the first place.

The only way to respond is, of course, "get fucked, lick my ass, suck my balls/lick me out." Most people write about punk music like it's

some kind of chore to listen to or that it's intrinsically impossible to get at what makes it punk, and thus we have a real lack of people wanting to write about it (and hence calls to readers to contribute, my attempt not only alienating my friend from wanting to write for the mag, but also from wanting to read it at all!!). But from my experiences with doing a zine and writing this column and trading fanzines around the world, there is no lack of people who want to read about it; it is just that most of them don't need to be insulted with the kind of pissweak rambling that my friend complained about on my part, so probably give up reading pretty quickly!

But here's my point: if hardcore learned anything from punk, it's that the imperative to have fun as a response to the misery/boredom of Thatcher's Britain or Reagan's America was as much of a problem as the misery/boredom itself. All it did was create unrealistic political expectations and glue huffing burnouts. Hardcore rejected the idea that "it was easy, it was fun" as some kind of justification for "going and doing it." In their place, hardcore introduced the ideas of discipline and hard work. Now for the most part, this is an extreme that is fairly useless on its own, and often produces similar unrealistic political expectations and coke-huffing burnouts. But as a reaction to the imperative to have fun, it was more effective in galvanizing a response from young people, and the network of fanzines and show promoters and bands that developed out of that scene came together so quickly, and continues to hold today. *MRR* was an important part of that, and is today.

Writing about music, it is not easy. It is not fun. But you should do it anyway, if you need to, and you should be prepared to be mocked or ignored or celebrated. I recently read an interview with Byron Coley, one of the better writers to cast an eye across the history of punk and hardcore music, and he acknowledges something similar to this: if you write, it's a response to a need, I think, that comes not from a desire to have fun. And if you write, set higher expectations that you can meet.

But, onto the pissweak rambling!

From France comes PIERRE & BASTIEN. Their "No Sex / Crise Boursiere" 7" is one of the best of the year. Two tracks of ultra-dark punk music that suggest an equal affinity for THE SCREAMERS and for BIG BLACK, but lack the kind of signifiers that would make you want to cringe (if you aren't already—some great bands have really unforgiving audiences!). The drum machine counts time, pulsing in the clamor of bold and abrasive guitars that sound somewhere between the boring surf band AGENT ORANGE and the scumbag schtick punk band DEAD BOYS, while a frog chants froggish words over the din. Remember the ANALS rec from a couple years back? This is my favorite record from France since then.

From London town, UK, comes a one-sheeter fanzine collage called *Pubic Disturbance*, subtitled: *Adventures in Girlgasms*! If it hasn't clicked yet, this is a fanzine bout *girls*. Girls are great! This one is about trying to get a band together of like-minded punks, and is a huge ad for the cause: some information on London's Vermillion, New York's artiste Elektra KB, the Feminist Library in London and *Shocking Pink* fanzoon. It is raw power, not girl power, and whatever band comes out of this is going to rule.

From Australia: I should briefly note here that the CHOSEN FEW's "The Joke's On Us" EP has just had a reissue on Dirty Dog Records. And guess what? It sounds like shit! Absolute garbage. Save your pennies or kroners! The pressing plant threw some semen into the vinyl mix, herpes sores have sprouted out of the groove, and the needle jumps in and out of the infections. Don't buy it unless you can find it cheap (some poor saps have paid *big* money for this already), and even then, hold onto it until you can track down any of the older reissues (on Hate, on Au Go Go, and Ryan from Ryebread Rodeo did one back there sometime)! Someone with sense will eventually repress it on some nice sounding vinyl and all will be right in the world. In the meantime, shhhh, the 30th issue of Distort I just released is a split 7" between EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING and DEATHWISH, who were pre-CHOSEN FEW hard rockers. But, shit, what kinda asshole uses their column to promote their own tired finance scammers? Lowlife!

Yeap from PISSCHRIST has been working on a new label called Hardcore Victim. The first couple releases are the TEARGAS 7" and the LEPROSY demo. The LEPROSY demo is a great tribute to noisy UK punk… minus the noise! The songs are decent, the vocalist has an awesome Australian sounding snarl, but the guitarist/producer needs to turn up the disgraceful ear barrage! A band to keep an eye out for if you draw DISORDER logos on your pencilcase in biology class, once they figure out where the volume is.

Brisbane's TEARGAS have taken a few pages out of the DEATHSIDE and BASTARD school of songwriting, and owe the same nods and winks towards *Feel The Darkness*. Their 7" features the best song from their demo and three newer tracks, with a far brighter sound and clearer mix than said demo. The guitar work on this record is on par with anything coming from Japan in the last couple of years—one of the great idiosyncrasies of Jap guitarists is that they always demanded front of the mix and plenty of overdubs to accentuate their playing. TEARGAS have a tasteful amount of this, enough to let you know they like the Japanese hardcore but also enough to let you know they understand 'em as well and don't need to better them. Here's where it obviously differs: the lyrics. Me and you, we are against war, we don't like it and we don't want it. Unlike most bands drawing from our Japanese friends, TEARGAS thankfully take that for a given, and Neil's lyrics are a step above anything I've read in punk record for while. I'm not at all interested in "clever" lyrics. I don't care if a record is missing a lyric sheet, I usually don't read them. But Neil's lyrics are insightful, controlled, and worth reading. Great fucking work on this one. You know what they say, if you buy one Japanese hardcore record this August, make it… TEARGAS.

If you play punk, hardcore, garage noise or any music with a bit of grit and rawness to it, or if you write a fanzine that loosely covers the same sonic territory, and you DON'T live in the US, Japan or Sweden, please get in touch. My address is DANIEL STEWART PO BOX 239 NORTH CARLTON VICTORIA 3054 AUSTRALIA.

A short while back, Dave, our roadie in this story, reminded me that his twin sister, Erika, just had a baby. How time flies. It seems like yesterday that Dave, who was in bands like Lost Locker Combo and now the Mess Around, a fucking great band, was just in teenage hell. Well, I suppose *anyone* who tours with Furious George is in hell…

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"Half pound crab legs: $2.95," read the white sign near the side of the road.

It was the first of our five-day whirlwind tour of the East Coast, and we were in a shithole of a town called Manassas, Virginia. On the way down there in Evan's dad's car, we tuned to WGAY, "Washington DC's Easy Listening," and heard that the town was having water problems. It seemed that all the water was running brown. "But there is nothing to worry about in Manassas," said the smooth-talking and slightly swishy D.J.

"Ha ha," laughed Dave, our sixteen-year-old roadie for Furious George, "WGAY!"

We all laughed along with Dave, and made jokes about the station and the fact that we could supply the entire town with brown water that tasted of beef jerky, diet soda, and McDonald's. Our tour diet.

"That woman at the last rest area knew we were all part of a band," exclaimed Dave.

I told him I knew, and that she had told me that Toad The Wet Sprocket had visited her the day before, and purchased bottled water and Now and Laters.

"Would you guys shut up and help me find the fucking club?" said Evan, from behind his prescription Ray-Bans and five o'clock shadow.

"I think the place with the crab legs is where we are playing," said Michael, seated up front next to Evan, busy puffing away on a Camel Light.

Evan turned the car around and we drove back to the sign that read "Half pound crab legs: $2.95." The words on the building behind the sign told us it was the Admiral's Inn, the "venue" we were supposed to be playing.

"Where's our name?" asked Evan, kinda pissed.

"Right below Puppet Show and Spinal Tap,"

answered Michael.

***

Touring can be lots of fun. It can also knock the wind out of you. And if you are in a small car with three other guys who are having the wind knocked out of them, it's a good thing to roll down the windows and let lots of air circulate. It's also a good thing to get out of that car when you can. And we did, behind the Admiral's Inn, next to a handwritten sign that read "Punk House Show This Way," with an arrow pointing toward our left.

As we walked toward a door in the back of the restaurant, a few kids skated by us on their boards, and asked if we were the Neurotiks. We told them no, that we were Furious George. They didn't say anything, and just kept skating.

"George?" asked this really skinny kid with huge glasses, a "punkafier" distortion pedal t-shirt, and shorts. I hate shorts.

"Yeah," I said, "and you must be Wade."

I knew it was him from his voice. A heavy southern drawl that seemed listless. I had talked to him on the phone a few times, and he had promised that "lots of kids" would show up. I saw maybe ten.

"Welcome to Manassas. Ya'll get here safe and everything?" asked Wade.

I told him we did, and thanks for having us down there and all.

"Ya know, maybe more people will show up. I made a bunch of fliers and put them up in school and stuff."

I thanked him for that, and when he walked away I told Dave, our roadie, that the way Wade looked at his sneakers when he talked, and the fact that for some reason he was an emotional black hole, made him remind me of Eeyore, the donkey from Winnie-the-Pooh.

"Nobody likes me," said Dave, imitating Eeyore. And Wade. And perhaps Evan, a little.

We unloaded our equipment into the back of the Admiral's Inn, and got a good look at the place. The room we were playing looked like a conference room in a hotel. Either that or a room for wakes at a funeral parlor. The floor was covered in carpet, the walls in cheap wallpaper. Up in the front of the room was where the bands were playing. A linoleum floor.

"We didn't have no PA until about two hours ago," explained Wade, "but I done got one now!"

I looked at the PA. Two speakers. Two microphones. Whatever.

"Good Job, Wade," I said to the guy, trying to cheer him up.

"I guess so," he said, looking at his sneakers again, "I guess it'll do. I hope you like it." Damn Eeyore.

Soon the first band went on. I forgot their name, but they were a bunch of fourteen-year-olds yelling about how they are "straight edge" and don't do any drugs or drink or have sex. Of course, after their set, they all ran outside with their big Xs on their hands and began chain smoking cigarettes.

"Oi, George, I'm tired," said Evan as we stood in the parking lot looking at all the kids.

"Me too," I told him.

"Where are we gonna stay tonight?" he asked. I thought about it, and suggested that since the next show was in Philly, we might as well just go home. Maybe even blow off our set and leave now. It was obvious that this wasn't our crowd.

"Not play?" said Michael, our drummer, who overheard our conversation. "We drove all the way here and we aren't gonna play?"

I told him to calm down, and that I was only kidding. Sort of.

A couple of more bands played next, including Wade's band Darth Vedder, who, according to Michael, make New York City's worst band, Dick Army, "look like virtuosos."

Then this band from Philly called Krissy played. And they were awesome. A power pop punk-filled machine with lots of good songs and a real neat attitude. I really liked them, and we hung out with them after their set.

"Did Wade give you guys directions too?" asked the lead singer guy of Krissy.

I nodded my head, and we all laughed. Krissy arrived later to the show than we did.

"You guys looking forward to tomorrow's show?" asked the bass player guy. The one with the dark hair and sideburns.

The next day we were booked to play with Krissy and Darth Vedder and some other bands at the First Unitarian Church in Philly.

"Yeah," I said, "I can't wait"

"Cheer up," said the singer guy, "soon we'll all be out of here."

Next up was the Neurotiks. They played real hardcore music and all the kids loved them. All 25 of them. I watched for a while, then went to the parking lot where I got in a conversation with a girl who told me she used to be vegan, worked for Food Not Bombs, and was an animal rights activist. She said all the stress of being so politically correct drove her to the loony bin for a while. I looked around and wondered when she'd get out.

Finally it was our turn to play, and of course half the kids left. So we had a crowd of about twelve. Maybe thirteen, if you count the Spanish guy who was selling tacos in the back of the room.

"We're Furious George," I said into the mic, "and it's great to be here in Manasshole."

Food and drinks flew. As did plenty of bad jokes. The highlight of our set was playing "Freebird" and the kids actually *liking* it. Then we played some rap, and everyone took turns doing their own thing. One guy was actually really talented. He could be the next Vanilla Ice. Of Manassas, that is.

Outside in the parking lot after our set, Wade paid us our guarantee. I was impressed.

"Here's your money, George," moaned Wade, as he looked at the pavement, "hope ya had fun."

I told him we did, and I was looking forward to seeing him in Philly the next day. What I was thinking was how much I wanted to go home and play *Final Doom* on my Playstation.

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After eating at an IHOP outside of Baltimore, where Michael's French toast was covered with salt instead of sugar, we found a room at some motel called Comfort Inn. Evan went to the check-in desk and told them we were two people. As it turns out, we got the last room. The rest were taken by Christian tour groups.

We entered our room with all the equipment and neatly stacked it near the self-standing air-conditioning. Then we called beds.

"I get the one nearest the TV!" shouted Dave.

"You're just the peon roadie," yelled Evan, "I want the one near the TV."

"Since I'm the boss," I said, in my toughest voice possible, "I'll say who sleeps where."

I was immediately showered with garbage.

As it turns out, I got the bed with Dave, nearest the television. And thank God for that. Neither Evan nor Michael took a shower. So I took two just to make up for them.

When it was time to take my "bedtime pills," Dave asked if I wanted a sip of his cherry Slurpee he had purchased at the local 7-11. I took a swig with my pills and tasted cherry and crappy beer. I looked over at Michael, and he just smiled, with that dumb Michigan boy grin, as he sipped from his forty-ouncer of Ballentine.

I drifted in and out of sleep that night having nightmares about my band watching me sleep and making fun of my snoring, and the fetal position I curl up in when unconscious.

The next morning while having coffee, everyone made snoring noises at me, and I was told that Dave had been my "cock-pocket" for the night.

"You fuck-weasels," I said back to them, using slang either Michael or Dave had made up the night before in regards to who was sleeping with who.

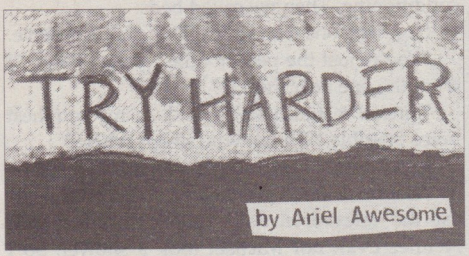
The next thing I knew it was raining garbage again.

To be continued…

Endnotes:

1. Again, I have two books out, *Playing Right Field: A Jew Grows in Greenwich* and *Surfing Armageddon: Fascists, Fishnets, and Body Fluids In Florida*, both on Soft Skull Press, and you can get them at any swell bookstore or on Amazon!
2. www.georgetabb.com
3. Devin Skelton from Potato Famine has a new solo record out called *Smoother Than My Morning Coffee*. Great folk punk here that really has turned me on to that genre. Well, actually, it seems that some folk music was *always* punk! Yay!!!! Anyway, this is the *best* music of that genre I've ever heard, and Devin's songs are some of the best working class anthems I've ever heard. When he covers songs like "Hey Union Joe" and "Casey Jones," he sings them with such conviction that you'd swear they were written yesterday. Then there's "Don't Take My Papa Away From Me," a gut-wrenching anti-war song if there ever was one. You go, Devin! And yeah, "Diversity = Equality" is right from the heart and oh-so-true.
4. Cheetah Chrome from the Dead Boys and Sylvain Sylvain from some lame band except for their singer have a new band together called Batusis. Yup, it's named after that *Batman* dance, and this four song EP really really rocks. Real good sloppy New York City Rock 'n' Roll a la great bands of the past like Starr, and of course the Dead Boys. It's on Smog Veil Records and my only gripe is that someone stole from me for the

song "What You Lack In Brains" and you know who you are! Other than that, that song and "Bury You Alive" are great modern day punk anthems. You go, Cheetah!



In the best letter I've ever received, she wrote: "you said what you didn't know during adolescence could fill volumes, and I had to voice what that made me feel – How do you fill those volumes? I know there are a lot of things I don't know, but I don't know what they are, and I don't know how to learn them."

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The Griffith Park observatory's white domes perch atop craggy brown hills full of coyotes and brush, standing watch over Los Angeles. At sunset you can rest your head against the cool stone wall and watch as the city lights come up. The boulevards stretch out in unbending glimmering lights into the distance. Some race to the desert mountains, and some to the sea. The early summer air is warm and the sweet strong smell of lilac hangs heavy. Watching the colors change in the sky, and the darkness descend on the city, away and above real life, it's easy to see life as it is: a succession of choices among circumstance. Millions of lives are unfolding below, following a course or charting a new one. Like a bird or a small pagan god, I watch, thankful not to be participating for the moment. Plotting the fates of others instead, and guessing at lives unknown. Telling myself stories.

Why do we tell ourselves stories?

We were watching TV, and mother was braiding my hair. There was a wedding on with red roses and pink bridesmaids. My mother thought the bride and groom seemed meant for each other. "True love" she said.

"How do you know?" I asked, looking up at her.

"You can just tell he's the one for her," she said turning my head with her hands back toward the TV.

I wondered why she couldn't tell her first two husbands weren't the one, and why now the one was my grouchy drunk stepfather who made a habit of locking me out of the house.

As she finished the second of the long braids hanging down my back I whispered "bullshit" under my breath.

Can we know anything with any degree of certainty?

I tried to break up with him. And in the process of trying to work it into words, he said we should get married. His scruffy face was hopeful, and full of love. I couldn't say anything. He started talking about Reno, and Vegas, ways we could sneak away and come back bound together forever. He talked about kids, about a boy and a girl. I was quiet. I felt my resolve weaken under his soft hope. I knew he had felt me slipping away. I was learning, growing, changing, and he was stuck in the same place. Living with his parents, parking cars for minimum wage, never enough money to get out, get away. He had just enough to tread water. He felt me slipping away, and tried to stop it the only way he knew how. I didn't say no. I couldn't crush him the first time he opened up, the first time he hoped for forever. But it was the one thing I needed to hear to know it was over. Running away to Vegas to get a quick wedding, the way everyone else in my family had, made me feel sick and sad. I knew we were on vastly different paths then. I was eighteen years old and he wanted me to settle down and start a family. I lied and told him I would think about it. We slept close in his twin bed, and I slipped out before dawn. As I drove away, I thought of the future I was leaving behind. I felt deep resounding guilt, but I also felt free.

There is no right path, no wrong.

I refused to stop using my pink and black striped canvas bag even as it fell apart, even as it could not hold all I needed it to. The straps fell apart, so I pinned them together. When the seams started to go I sewed them with floss. A small ragged hole developed that I could not patch so I tried not to carry small things in my bag. It faded to a deep pink brown and dusty charcoal, but where the straps lifted off you could still see the colors of its old self, deep bright magenta and crisp black. I carried it with me around the country and around the world. I overlooked it's slow disintegration, and failure to be very useful. It was a comfort. It had held all I needed for so long it made me feel like I was prepared and safe even when I wasn't. I clung to it for comfort though it was clearly outgrown. It was simple and small, and I wanted my life to stay that way, even as I plunged headlong into the world.

Everything is always changing. The world is constantly made and remade, thought and rethought.

When I was five we were at the beach and a dying whale had washed ashore. I ran my small hands along whale, feeling it still heaving with breath. It was a shining grey-black mass, and I looked at my reflection in its glossy skin. It smelled like salt and deep water. I pressed my face to its side cooling my cheek. I began singing. Singing a little song to the whale, to its skin. The whale stopped it's slow rising and was still.
I kept singing, as I climbed awkwardly up on top of it. Scrambling, sliding until I reached the top, to look out across the beach; still singing, maybe dancing. My mother walked across the sand, a frown slanting across her face.

"Get off of that dead thing!" she called into the wind and crashing waves. I started to cry.

There is no god to condemn or pardon you.

I was folding clothes in my upstairs room when the overhead light flickered out. I grabbed a bulb from the kitchen downstairs and ran back up the dark stairs to my dark room. My little desk lamp gave a dim warm orange tint to the room. Without any other clear options I balanced on my empty hamper trying to replace the bulb. Just as I finished taking out the old bulb and replacing it with a fresh one the hamper buckled beneath me. As I fell, I clipped the corner of my desk with my brow. The resulting massive black eye was a deep black purple ringed in red. When I moved my head I could feel the built up liquid slosh in my eyelids. I laid on the ground in my empty house and wished there were someone I could trust to help me. I ached, and worried over my swelling face that felt hot and alien to my touch. I didn't call the one person I wanted to because I was embarrassed, and it was late and he worked early. But he was the only person I wanted to call in that silly scary moment alone. I laid on the ground and debated with myself for a long time before I picked up the phone. He went from being the boy I was seeing to the boy I could count on when he got out of bed to drive over and get me from my empty house. He held frozen peas on my swollen face, and told me I was pretty.

Do we find ourselves or make ourselves?

Work had dried up a while ago, and I had been in my pajamas for a few days skulking around the apartment studying for the GRE. High on coffee and lack of social interaction, I paced, reciting definitions for an imaginary audience. I had not done the dishes, I did not call anyone back. I stopped my frenzied performance to look at my bank statement again. Over drawn. For the thousandth time, I sat down with my head in my hands and said, "Fuck, what am I gonna do?"

Paul came home and I tried to do the dishes, but instead I slumped down to the floor and cried thinking about all the resumes I'd sent out, and all the money I owed him. I thought about how I kept studying and making up money making schemes, but nothing had changed in the last six months and I was finally broke. Beyond broke. I felt so self-indulgent so useless. I thought about how a graduate degree in art would just get me more debt and more heartache.

For the first time I seriously questioned if I really want to be an artist. I'd been having doubts for the last year. I couldn't seem to get myself to commit to working on projects, and every time I went to a gallery opening it felt so irrelevant, so disconnected from the real world, that I wondered why I chose this world to begin with. My whole life has been tangled up with visions, and making things. Its part of who I am but I didn't want to make art for money, I hated it.

For the first time, I thought of being something else. I thought of trying to be of use in the world, of helping people. I felt better. I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I felt closer to finding out. I got back up off the floor and did the dishes.

How do you fill those volumes? Be brave. Take chances. Fall down.

You are who you decide to be.

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Thanks for all the letters, particularly to the lovely girl who sent the letter that inspired this column. I read them, even if I can't respond to everyone.

Please send more inspirational letters to arielawesome@gmail.com. What you think it's not a letter if it's electronic? Bullshit.

MIND LESS CONTENTMENT

WITH CHUCK BARRELS

Greetings sportsfans! It seems like months since we've last rapped…actually, I think it has been months. I dunno, I'm losing track of time over here ever since Hippie Johnny moved into the apartment. That guy is always stoned. He's never straight. Best roommate I've ever had! Now that summer has rolled on in, we've been doing a lot of hanging out on the stoop, just puffing some areola and jamming the hell out of this new 2XLP by BIRDS OF MAYA called "Ready to Howl". It's on Richie Records, which might be my favorite record label since Solid Sex Lovie Doll closed up shop. Where art thou Mr. Z Freddy Fred? I miss you! But anyway, this BIRDS OF MAYA thing, it practically packs the bowl for you… Johnny says it's supposed to be the soundtrack to a movie about a "lost weekend" of drugs, drinkin' and fightin', and we've been creating our own version of this film every weekend since the record came in the mail. But seriously, I can't wait to see this flick. I've been calling Moviefone every Friday for the past month waiting for some show times at the local googolplex, but I guess it hasn't premiered yet. Maybe it'll play at the drive-in or something, that would be sweet. The gatefold on this thing is pretty cool as well, and me and John came up with a great gimmick they could have used for it. Get this: put a big rolling paper in the middle, like the record was a big pack of wraps! It would be so cool. I gotta call Richie and tell him about this, maybe they can use it for the next record. I can't believe no one thought of it yet…So, musically, if you can't tell what this sounds like from my already quite descriptive commentary, it's like the greatest biker-psych record never recorded in 1969. Wha-wha-wham-my bar guitar destruction and a rhythm section that purrs and growls like a motor assembled by the greasiest and beefiest of gearheads. 550 big block action. *roar.* All you hardcores out there might want to wear a helmet while listening, because I know all those YOUTH OF TODAY records you've been spinning haven't prepared you total zone-out heavy dooty trip-rock this serious. I actually had the pleasure of seeing them live a few weeks ago (Johnny didn't go because he got "the fear" from one too many zongs), and it's hard to believe only three skinny dudes are laying down this racket, and they weren't even wearing leathers or mechanic's boots. I think one of them was even wearing shorts! It takes all types man…they had one of those "tour only" singles with them too, so I bought like twelve of them so we could sell 'em to some Termbos on eBay and make some scratch. It's a decent little two song trip with some homeless guy playing harmonica with them. A nice little side ride to go along with the three-day tour of the LP. You should buy both of these joints, then buy a couple real joints, and hit the lights... (testoster tunes.blogspot.com)

Man, the amount of hot molten jams coming out this summer is just phenomenal. June and July of Tha Dime have been a couple of the heaviest months of my life, and a lot of thanks goes to the debut LP by Australia's DEAD FARMERS called "Go Home", which has been consistently blowing my hair back for weeks on end. Another trio bringing the power, these blokes bring to mind COSMIC PSYCHOS jamming on some choice CCR nugs or something else completely awesome. Steak-and-potatoes psychedelic rock, no smoke and mirrors, just authentic guitar histrionics and burly swampland rhythm-n-chug. It's straight beef. Half of the time it makes me want to pound brews and beat the shit out of Johnny and the other half of the time it makes me want to fire up a huge pipe with him and stare at the sun until my eyes melt. Aussies make some of the most honest music in the world somehow, and this is just the pure essence of god's rock'n'roll without any baggage or message. Unless that message is "Holy fuck, this thing smokes!" Both Bon and Rowland should be proud of these three lads, who definitely know how to tear the fucking house down. Some of the outros and blow-outs on these cuts are just insanity, drenched in feedback and fuzz and the rhythm section sucking you down like a Guatemalan sinkhole. If you want some music made with balls and sweat instead of weenie-smoking pop-punk, step up to the mic brother…(www.myspace.com/ripsociety records)

My god, the heaviness continues…MOUNT CARMEL have released their first LP on Siltbreeze Records of all labels, and my oh my, what a long strange trip this thing is. Firstly, I can't imagine what got into Tom Lax's herbal tea to make him decide to release this. This is the same guy who greenlit not one but two LPs from US GIRLS?! C'mon now! MOUNT CARMEL hail from Columbus and sound like nothing else emanating from that city. They don't even sound like they're emanating from this frickin' year! Straight outta 1971 or so, this LP is a total blues-rock jamathon for modern times executed with a vintage sound and serious chops. Sure, covering TEN YEARS AFTER makes you seem a little bit like Civil War re-enacters, but you can't deny the unstoppable force of this record. And it's another power trio! The label is touting this as sounding like GROUNDHOGS but I'm going to say it's more FREE and BLUESBREAKERS based. Certainly more John Mayall than Tony McPhee, at least. Not as outright nasty or fried as the previous two records we talked about, but don't hold that against these dudes. This is the record you break out to get the party started, perfectly suitable for daylight hours and backyard and/or poolside drinking and smoking. Even the gals can dig, as the guitar soloing is downright sexy at times. These cats are totally dialed in and the vox even sound like they were phoned in from the Seventies and the guitar slinger is an ace in the pocket. They play it cool and mellow for a lot of the LP, but once they start going off on a tangent they do smoke some serious jams out. Which makes me want to smoke some serious doobage. Get on this right away, it will do your soul good. (www.siltbreeze.com)

After overdosing on rock action via those three platters, it might be time for some lighter fare. The new 12" by Minnesota's REAL NUMBERS should rescue you from the depths of total stoned-out rock bliss via eight songs (spinning at a wonderful 45rpms on super thick vinyl) of simple and energetic teenage kicks, coming from a decidedly DIY Anglo-pop angle. It summons visions of TELEVISION PERSONALITIES with some vintage UK-style power-pop moves in place of the twee silliness. Recorded crisply and medium-fi, it has some low frill and hook-filled poppers mixed in with some more dynamic post-punk arrangements. Limited to only 300 copies with a striking silkscreened sleeve, it's deceptively catchy, slightly awkward in an endearing way and a little bit smarter than it appears on first glance. I'm no pop simpleton, but I have to admit I'm falling for its charms. (www.threedimensionalrecords.com)

Let's talk about one more of these the big boys before I pack it in. Vancouver's SEX CHURCH have let loose with a 12" after a real promising 7" and cassette, it's titled *Six Songs By…* and comes to us from NYC's Convulsive Records, who haven't released a dud yet. Featuring a line-up with members of DEFEKTORS, VAPID, LADIE'S NIGHT and even CATHOLIC BOYS, but the band's reach extends much further than any of those acts. Surprisingly and emotionally resonant, I guess you would to call this VU-influenced rock, or perhaps rock influenced by the numerous bands who were influenced by VU. A song like "The Floor" rises and sprawls from that sacred lineage, rhythmic guitar drone speaking to you without being hamfisted or redundant. But that's not their only trick, as they're also possessed of the ghosts of death-punk (or I at least hear GUN CLUB in there somehow) and SPACEMEN 3-meets-CHEATER SLICKS guitar drone-and-drive moves, all woven together with some of the ethos of the garage-punk genre , but not exactly sounding overtly like it. Post-garage? Bummer-rock? I think they're onto something here. Beautifully designed silkscreened sleeves are a bonus, get with it. (convulsiverecords@gmail.com)

IN THE RED RECORDS DEPT.: You know, for a second there I thought I was going to be able to do a column without any developments from Mr. Hardy's stable. But then, whaddya know, he's reissued the latest LP by THE SPITS, call it IV or s/t or "School's Out" if you like, but call it an In The Red scoop no matter which you choose. Hardy has now added perhaps earth's mightiest punk band to his already heavy-hitting roster of mercenaries. The New York Yankees of garage-punk with Larry as Steinbrenner, signing any and all free agents to insure his dominance of the entire league. I'm amazed at his gall and moxie once again. Well done sir. And to make it even saltier, he released a limited edition "Clint Howard version" of this which is already long gone and just another piece to the impossible puzzle that is the SPITS vinyl discography. (www.intheredrecords.com)

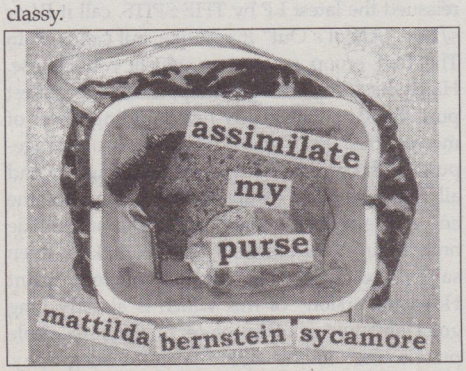
COOL SINGLE DEPT.: HOME BLITZ, ladies and gentlemen. You should know the name by now, as DD and Co. released one of the best records of

2009 with "Out of Phase", and he continues the ante-upping with the "Perpetual Night" 7" which is hot off the presses. The title track could be his best and straightest rocking cut yet, and it will make you glad to be alive. The flipside is a SEARCHERS cover that proves you can take a song that sucks and actually make it good if you have the talent. A must-have and front-runner in the Single of the Year sweepstakes. (www.almostreadyrecords.com)

COOL TAPE DEPT.: ROTCORE. Get to know and love the word, because 2010 is the year it breaks. A convoluted strain of hardcore-punk from Upstate NY, it encompasses what may be some of the purest and most feral acts roaming the East. BRAIN CAR, BAD TASTE, LOVE PORK, INSUBORDINATES, RATIONAL ANIMALS and others are unadulterated young bands that are releasing some of the most primal and pure punk rocking these days, unfazed by outside influence in their insular little weirdo scene. They're ready to start taking over, and this tape compilation of the scene is going to make a good primer for the uninitiated. Comes with a complex and maniacal zine explaining what Rotcore is and why, and contains interviews with each band that proves they might all just be inbred mutants anyway. A value packed and anthropologically satisfying experience all around. (brettm552000@ yahoo.com)

COOL REISSUE DEPT.: You guys remember Scott Soriano? That guy used to grace these very halls with a monthly column if what the elders tell me is correct. Well, apparently the old man runs a record label these days and he's just released a mind-blowing compilation from a Seventies band called OZZIE from Sacramento. "The Parabolic Rock" is full of proto-punk moves that bring together the varied forces of THE GIZMOS, ROXY MUSIC, ZAPPA, THE DICTATORS and hundreds of other glam-prog-punk namedrops from years gone by. It's two LPs worth of essentially unheard majesty, all killer and no live/demo filler of questionable merit. Weird and rocking. This is how an archival release is done folks, heavy gatefold packaging with an informative and graphically pleasant spread, thick wax and useful and lengthy liner notes. I had no idea Soriano was still alive, but thank god that greaser is still kicking. (www.s-srecords.com)

So that's it for this installment, brothers and sisters, I'll see you next time. Until then, stay classy.



Possible

When I moved back to San Francisco at the end of 2000, I went to a Chanukah party. By this point I generally didn't go to parties, even though I keep writing about them, but a Chanukah party sounded innocuous enough. It was at the house of one of JoAnne's former lovers, who lived less than a block from where we used to live. Actually, their house was kind of like our house, in the way that it became a destination. It was the house where I stayed when I went to San Francisco after JoAnne died, in Laurie's room—that room kind of looked like the middle room in our old apartment, only one window facing an air shaft, so when I first thought about that time I kept thinking about that other room: did Laurie really move back in? That didn't make sense. No, it was down the street, and Andee was staying there too but I didn't remember that until he mentioned it. The building was falling apart, but they'd painted the walls so many clashing colors that it jumped out at you.

At the Chanukah party, I thought we would sit around a table spinning dreidels and eating latkes, but when I got there it was packed and the rooms were dim, all those clashing colors jumping in shadows. Everyone was working the rocker junkie look — trucker caps and eyeliner, fake fur coats so ratty they looked like they had skins, and maybe they did. It was like the worst New York high-fashion disaster, except cheaper clothes and harder drugs. So many glazed eyes it was hard to keep track—heroin here, crystal there, acid in the hallway and there's the doorbell—cocaine!

This was the new San Francisco: peer around any corner in the Mission or South of Market and you'd see enormous luxury lofts that looked like they were made of particle board and aluminum. Drunk yuppies crowded the sidewalks in front of posh bars in the neighborhoods they used to shun: anything for a new discovery! Hummers sped down side streets: parking reconnaissance. One famously-cited driver admitted he ran over someone's grandmother to avoid spilling his cappuccino, inspiring a bus shelter ad.

My closest friends had warned me, but they had also convinced me to move back—we're you're family, that's what they said. The two people who said that the most left San Francisco within a few months—I guess that's what family does. Most people I knew had moved to Oakland and they said I should live by Lake Merritt, I would like the buildings, but Oakland wasn't like Brooklyn—you couldn't get around after midnight. I needed to live in New York without New York; I knew that meant the Tenderloin. The dot-com frenzy was in full swing, so I found myself entering buildings without front doors, walking down bare hallways lit by exposed bulbs, to enter moldy thousand-dollar studio apartments facing other people's fire escapes. Often I didn't even have enough time to wonder if it was possible to live in these dumps, because they were already taken—or, there would be a dozen people with computer jobs, checkbooks in hand, all vying for the manager or realtor's attention: Is the neighborhood safe? Is there anything nearby? How far is Union Square?

On my application, I became a technical writer who made a preposterous amount of money—everything except my name and Social Security number was fake. I got lucky, and ended up with an apartment on the top floor, set back from the street because of a burned-down building next door, facing Polk Street and the sun. Or, okay, maybe I didn't get that lucky—I had to outbid someone to obtain the lease, but it was the nicest place I'd seen. I didn't know about the roaches or the rats or the pigeons yet, but the kitchen was big enough that I could put my bed in the dining area with a screen between sleep and vegetables, which felt luxurious. Certain people thought it was a strange set-up—why did they put the bedroom over there? No, darling—I did.

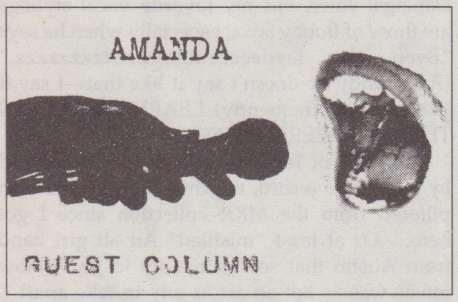
Of course, my technical writing consisted of giving blowjobs in plush off-white hotel beds while the TV flashed stock prices behind me. I remember one Tuesday night, after my third trick and on my way to a fourth, stepping into the W and finding so many people in the lobby that they spilled into the elevators to make deals on their cell phones, cocktails in hand. Outside the Ritz-Carlton, there was a couple who looked like they couldn't be older than 25, stepping out of a Rolls. The guy was wearing a waistcoat and holding a cigar in one hand and an attaché in the other; the woman was wearing a full-length fur and gold slip-on heels. At least I was making cash. In fact, I was making more than the outlandish figure on my rental application: after all, I had become a New York City hooker—no longer would I take the bus to save money, or turn down tricks who called when I was hanging out with a friend; I would show up within a half-hour, in full preppy drag. The tricks loved it. Sometimes they even asked me if I was gay.

Somewhere in all this was my relationship with Derek, the only friend left who I called family. When he went on psych meds, I could tell immediately that they made him more manic and more depressed, so nihilistic that it was scary, but I'd already expressed my disapproval beforehand, so it didn't help when I said it again. He kept changing meds and it kept getting worse. He would talk about buying a gun, he wanted to keep it under the bed; I told him I wouldn't come over if there was a gun in the house. I felt like he was abandoning everything that health meant to us. When he started eating meat again, he said it was for health reasons, but then he would grab a hamburger at Burger King. He was angry at me for judging him, and maybe I deserved some of that anger.

But the hardest part was when Derek started lying about everything. Maybe this was after I told him I couldn't deal with hanging out when he was drinking, because he became a macho asshole instead of the friend who meant so much. He would tell me half of everything, or maybe half of the half he remembered, or wanted to remember, and I had to figure out what to believe. Sometimes it was obvious, like when he stopped to get cigarettes and he came out of the store with a fifth of liquor in his hand—I thought you said you weren't drinking tonight, I said carefully. His face got all red with anger: I'm not drinking, this is a Coke.

He might have even said: don't you trust me, why don't you trust me? People were starting to talk about the market crashing, but no one could tell the difference yet, I mean no one we knew. Derek and I heard about a squat party on Market Street. That sounded ridiculous—who were they kidding? It wouldn't last more than 10 minutes. We headed over to see. We got to the address and it was a huge, boarded-up theater, dozens of bikes locked up outside. We walked up the stairs into a cavernous room full of brightly-painted murals and hundreds of people dancing to live music. Everyone was dressed to the nines in thrift store artistry—sure, it was sceney as all hell, but these were the weirdos I remembered. The party lasted for hours, without interruption, and without the arrival of the cops. I wondered what else might be possible.

The writing in this column is an excerpt from some crazy memoirish thing I'm working on called *The End of San Francisco*. My most recent book is a novel, *So Many Ways to Sleep Badly*. I'm also turning *lostmissing*, my public art project, into some kind of book-type thing, yay for more books! And I recently finished a new anthology called *Why Are Faggots So Afraid of Faggots?* I know you're wondering the same thing. Now I'm just waiting for someone to publish it. You can communicate with me via www.mattild-abernsteinsycamore.com, which includes past MRR columns. Or you can write to me at 537 Jones Street, #3152, San Francisco, CA 94102.



This afternoon at the bike shop, Timmy wheeled in his tiny mountain bike with training wheels. He had a flat and needed to patch the tube in his tire. Most kids have an idea of what they need to do when they come to the shop, especially those kids who come every week. Timmy immediately went to the tool wall and got a wrench and started to loosen the nut on one of his training wheels. The kids who come to the shop also have a good sense of when they need help. Timmy couldn't budge that nut and soon tapped me on the shoulder and asked for help. And that sucker was on tight! It took a few good hard pushes to get the nut loose enough for Timmy to take over again. And when he finally got the nut off, he said, "Thank you Jesus!" and I looked at him and said, "and thank you Amanda!" and he looked at me and said, "and Jesus." What do you do when a little kid looks at you with big brown eyes and wants you to thank Jesus? You give in. Well, a little bit. And possibly under your breath.

The nut on the other training wheel proved to be even more stubborn. Timmy and I ended up stripping it in the process of removing it from the axle. Well, mostly I ended up stripping it, and I secretly thought that I wanted to be busy helping someone else when it came time to put those training wheels back on.

Timmy went about taking off his back wheel, patching up the tube and putting the wheel back on the bike with minimal help from me. But then came time to put the training wheels back on and he tapped me on the shoulder and asked me to help. I asked Timmy if he wanted to try riding his bike without training wheels. He adamantly said no. It wasn't the time. Knowing what a bitch it would be to put those cursed crutches back on, I told him that he should just try. Now would be his chance! Before we put the training wheels back on! He said no. Again. Basically, I wore him down with my enthusiasm, and soon we were walking out to the parking lot. He told me not to let go. I said I wouldn't let go. His brothers and the other kids told me to let go. Timmy kept looking back at me to make sure I was still holding on. I told him I wouldn't let go. We went around and around the parking lot, him worried that I would let go and me wondering when would be the right time to let go. Finally, when he was looking straight ahead, I let go and stood still. He was riding away from me and reminding me not to let go at the same time. Then his brothers started shouting and he realized that he was riding! A bike! By himself!

He went riding, riding, riding straight into a table. He forgot to brake. I ran up to him and told him he did great, but needed to remember to brake. He looked at me with the biggest smile and said, "I was so happy! I was so happy I forgot about braking!"

That probably has been my happiest moment in a long long time.

These days I have been wrapped up in the response to the oil spill. It has consumed a large part of my life. In fact, a few weeks ago, I was dreaming in latitude and longitude, watching the plume slowing take over one grid square after another, like syrup cresting ridge after ridge in a homemade waffle.

An acquaintance contacted me at work a few weeks ago and said that mappers were needed to help with the oil spill response. I don't really consider myself a mapper, but I asked him to send me the details and I would consider it. He responded that people needed to be hired that afternoon; I either wanted the job or I didn't.

I have been miserable at my (now old) job for a while. I loved working with the neighborhoods and valued the relationships I had formed with the residents, but my boss, my job itself, the organization—I had been fed up and disappointed since November. I drove down to Houma the same day I was contacted and after a very brief interview (Do you know how to edit? Do you know what a shapefile is?) I was given a job.

The past two-and-a-half weeks have been chaotic, confusing, infuriating, and depressing. I spent a little over a week (but twelve hours a day, seven days a week) at the incident command center in Houma. Everybody is there. The corporate entity, the National Guard, the Coast Guard, the Department of Homeland Security, the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, the Louisiana Department of fish and wildlife, NOAA, Transport Canada—anyone who has a part in the containment or recovery effort has a presence in Houma. I joined the GIS lab and met the mappers and programmers and database managers who helped to build and coordinate all the maps and information that were coming in and going out every few hours. Most of what happened in that room went over my head, but the people in that room were smart and dedicated to disseminating the latest information to anyone who needed it.

Over the course of the week, different people would enter the lab: National Guardsmen who wanted to know how to track tiger boom in the field, Coast Guardsmen who wanted a grid map to plot points of oil sheen as they flew over the water. But whenever certain representatives from the corporate entity entered the room, you could feel the tension in your shoulders. Conversations were pleasant, but clipped. There was always a sense of relief (and some swearing) after the corporate entity walked out. While I don't understand a lot of what happened, I do know the gist—we were tasked with taking the information coming into us at all hours of the day and night and pushing it out graphically so that decisions could be made on how operations should be handled for the next day. However, how we performed our task and how the corporate entity wanted us to perform our task led to a battle over data and accessibility that ended with not so pretty results.

Last Friday evening we were informed that the guys who ran the lab would not be coming back. The company I'm contracted through blamed the corporate entity. The corporate entity blamed the contractor. We all gathered after work at Big Al's in downtown Houma to try to make sense of the finger-pointing and general lack of accountability. By the end of the night, almost everyone in the lab decided to leave. It was well known by all in the lab that I had quit my old job in order to take this one. So, as I was originally hired to go out into the field, one of guys who ran the lab told me he would try to transfer me to the field before the lab transitioned into other hands.

So now I'm working on the top floor of city hall. I'm working with a government agency that was born out of post-Katrina chaos. My "boss" acts as the liaison between the parishes and incident command in Houma—trying desperately to get them the information they need and that the corporate entity has been lackluster in supplying.

I've stated many times that I don't completely understand what's going on. And that's true. I don't understand the corporate entity's strategies for recovery or containment; I don't understand the parishes' booming plans; I'm even having trouble understanding myself as of late. But what I do understand is this—this spill, this gush is a mess. Every part of this effort is chaotic and partially disorganized. There is duplication of efforts in some areas while other areas are left untouched and unprotected until it's too late. There were at least two times in Houma that

I became so disgusted and alarmed by what I was hearing and seeing that I almost started crying. Now that I hear on a daily basis the resources that the parishes are requesting, I just feel sad. On Thursday a parish was desperately requesting a booming and skimming operation for a barrier island that was covered with nesting birds. Oil was less than a mile offshore. Incident command replied that eight National Guardsmen were struck by lightening while on the water the day before and they unfortunately couldn't send out any vessels to respond to the request due to similar weather conditions that day.

The next day I* asked a woman from the Office of Public Health what happened to those eight national guardsmen. Five were fine. The other three did not have life-threatening conditions. They did not have life-threatening conditions. But what condition are they in now?

When I was still in Houma, I stood one day next to Bruce, a mapper, and looked at his computer screen. Bruce was in charge of putting out the common operational picture—a map that had the latest information for the extent of the plume. That day, the plume on his screen was so large, so, so large, that I felt myself shutting down. He noticed this and he said, "Amanda, this is not your fault. Everyone in this room is using their skills to the best of their abilities to help those who are making the decisions about how to respond. You didn't cause this. You are helping the best way you can." I believed him, and didn't, at the same time.

So somehow in my brain, it makes perfect sense that my proudest accomplishment to date is teaching Timmy how to ride a bike.

*all names have been changed due to the ongoing status of this operation.

The founder of this magazine Tim Yo was an instigator. He had lots of people on his side and just as many people that couldn't stand his ass.

MRR always tables at the Anarchist book fair, and inevitably every year some older hippie or punk or whatever comes up and talks shit then proceeds to tell us that Tim Yo said something extremely fucked up to them and how they have never forgotten what a dick he was. I have read the *Outpunk* (killer queer punk zine from back in the day!) exposé in which *MRR* is called out as being a hetero white boys club (which it was). But…I have also had the editor of a gangster rap magazine tell me that *MRR* and Tim Yohannan was the inspiration for their project. I have also heard stories about how Tim would let the columnists have one month a year to talk shit on one another. No holds barred. No blood no foul.

I guess where I am going here is that I understand that this magazine means a lot of hate to some, a lot of love to some and a load of dismissed bullshit to others.

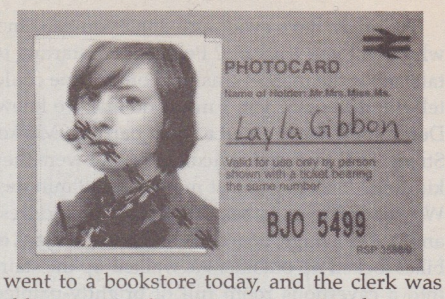
Bands nowadays don't need print media. They can easily hop on the internet and get all the basic information that they need to buy, sell, make, understand, follow etc. the scene. Unfortunately, with running the magazine, we miss shit and sometimes the attention needed to fully understand someone's project, is taken up by the ins and outs of running this crazy place. Well, a few months back *MRR* reviewed a racist band's record. This did not come to our attention until now and I can tell you that none of us took it lightly. Some people freaked the fuck out, others just wanted to ignore it and not give the band any more attention. We tried to find as much information as possible on the band to confirm or deny the claims which yielded the fact that the band is indeed a racist one. Someone pointed out that Tim Yo's policy was to review RAC bands in order to let people know they were pieces of shit to be avoided, but to leave out the contact information. I tend to agree with that idea, but a long time shit worker and rad old punk, pointed out that these days leaving those bands out completely is the smart thing to do, because just reviewing them is an advertisement and all one needs to do is look them up on the web to get in to it. That is not the exposure we want to give them. He is right and I think Tim Yo would have thought so too.

I never knew Tim. I have heard some funny stories, read what he has left behind and now am one of the two coordinators of the project that he made his life's work. For that, I am grateful and I can promise that the instigating he started will continue in the best way possible.

I want to start with one small step that I think is necessary, the step towards our economy. There are tons of punks around these days that have jobs, businesses and a wealth of information, and I think its time that we all started supporting each other instead of the bullshit that is offered. If you have a business or can provide a service that is reasonable in price or for trade, let me know. While punks should be supporting local / family / small business, we should also be supporting each other and with the advent of technology and the fucked up state that the world is in, the time is now. I just traded with Sioux Guitars for a killer distortion pedal. When a loved one passed away, punks went to some older punk friends of ours whom own a headstone business. This might sound nuts, but punks are everywhere not just distros and record stores (which we should be going to as well!!). It's time for the big takeover…

Random Shit: Sonskull, Nu Sensae, Sudor/Crimen de Estado split and the Viper EP fucking rip.
Clitfest PDX is going to be awesome!
"Fixed gear bikes are the new Rollerblades"

Laters!
mariam@maximumrocknroll.com



I went to a bookstore today, and the clerk was holding a copy of a comic, reviewed in this issue of *MRR*, called something along the lines of Henry and Glen. He asked me if I liked the Misfits/Danzig, then told me Glenn Danzig had just walked past me as I was entering the bookstore. He had gone and grabbed the zine to prevent Mr. Danzig from having to see it and thus be upset if the warning Rollins wrote on the back of said book holds any weight… Anyway, I totally did not see Danzig, or notice anyone that looked remotely Danzig-like anywhere nearby even though he allegedly brushed past me after putting all the book store clerks on the guestlist for his show tonight. I am very disappointed and am, as I write this simultaneously watching the video of "Mother" on YouTube. This isn't because I am not presently at a Danzig concert in 2010, I think that would be a spectacle and a disappointment, plus I don't think I would have gone to see Danzig at any point unless it was free. Just disappointed that I did not get to gawk at him. DISAPPOINTED! All caps style. I like Danzig's voice, but my favorite vocal stylings are those of Bobby Soxx, especially when he says "Even the laydeeeeeiiiiiizzzzzzzzzzzzzz." (Apparently he doesn't say it like that—I say it like that. I do, frequently). LEARN TO HATE! IN THE EIGHTIEEEEEEEEES.

Speaking of Texas punk, I also am consumed by the Foams record, which seems to have been pilfered from the *MRR* kollection since I got here… Or at least "misfiled" An all girl band from Austin that served mainly to prove how music was as apt an art as any to take apart… While putting together the article on the Curse in this issue I also discovered the split record they did with the Diodes had also disappeared.

I think Graham wrote this month about how crazy San Francisco Amoeba has been recently, and about Martin's big score. I picked up Government Issue's *Legless Bull* for a dollar, which is probably the best record score ever for that price for me. I have been attempting to put together a want list so I feel less bewildered when I go to the aforementioned former bowling alley now record store. Most of the platters I am on the hunt for tend to be shit like the Foams, and other weird punk girl bands, Teddy and the Frat Girls, y'know. I have been picking up anything that looks like it might be along those lines in those mystic 7" bins, but nothing I have grabbed has been as cool as the Ama Dots 7" which was acquired by my friend Scott about ten years ago, same location, 50c. I think my favorite punk 45s are desperate sorta repulsive hardcore items such as Neos or Mecht Mensch or Die Kreuzen or United Mutation, or their fucked up girl counterpart art punkers...
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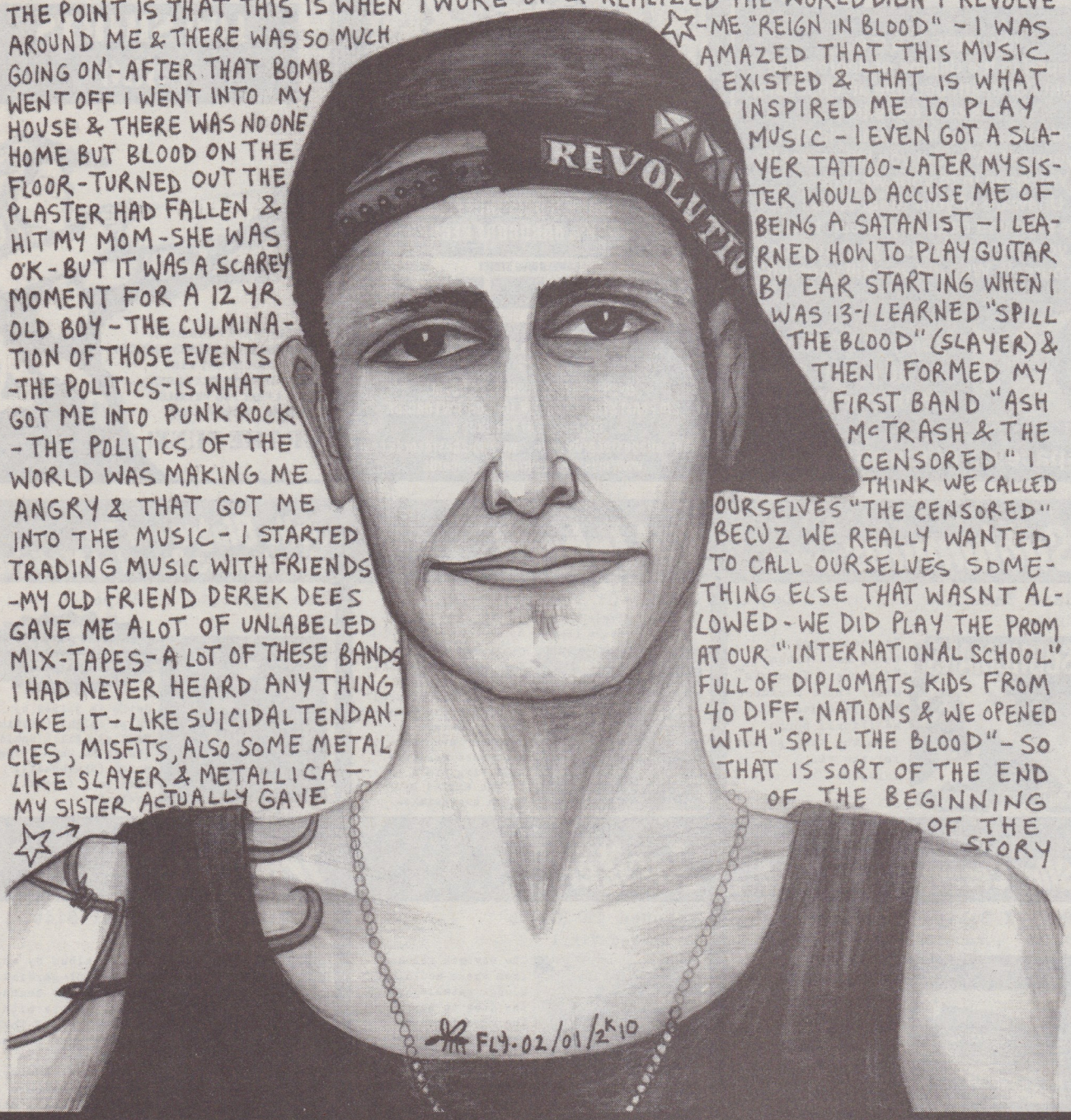
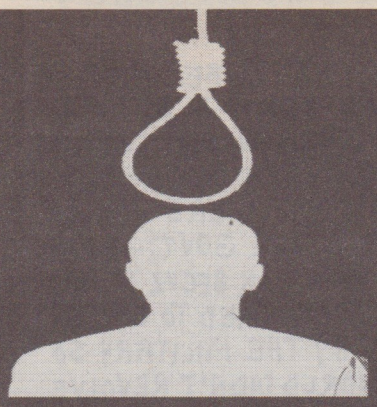


Ezra Kire - 02/01/2k10 - Lower East Side NYC

I didn't remember until recently that I first met Ezra in 1993 in SF when he was a scruffy little teenager hanging out on the street with Frank's Depression & they all came to my show! Since then he has been honing his hardcore skills as singer/songwriter/guitar for bands like Morning Glory, Leftover Crack & Choking Victim—For M-Glory dates & tours google: "myspace.com/morning glory official band run site" - direct contact: EZRAKIRE@GMAIL.COM - to contact Fly email fly@peops.org (put MRR in the subject so I know it's not spam) - PEOPs #5 zine now available! - contact microcosmpublishing.com - PEOPs #4 zine available too! - to order directly send $4 (usa pp) or $5 (ww pp) to Fly PO Box 1318 Cooper Stn NYC NY 10276 USA



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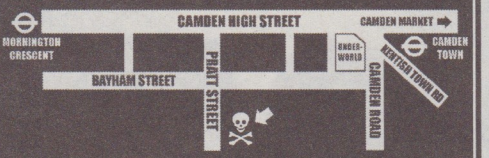

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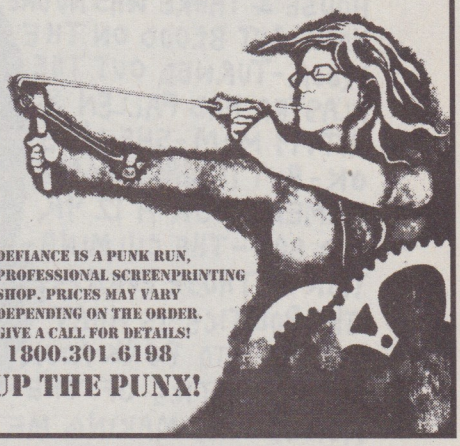

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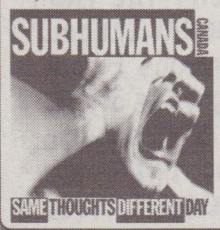

Re-recordings of their first album "Incorrect Thoughts" after three decades! They recorded six additional songs from the same period for the vinyl version!

Th' Inbred

Legacy Of Fertility CD
"A Family Affair (Legacy of Fertility Vol.1)" LP
"Kissin' Cousins (Legacy of Fertility Vol.2)" LP

Collected output from this mid '80s politically pointed punk act, plus unreleased bonus material. Their thrashy attack morphed into jazz-influenced hardcore. West Virginia's entry in the Killed By Death sweepstakes.

Jello Biafra and The Guantanamo School of Medicine

The Audacity of Hype
CD/LP

Jello Biafra and The Guantanamo School of Medicine
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JUNE / JULY 2010

Jello is joined by Ralph Spight (Victim's Family), Billy Gould (Faith No More), Jon Weiss (Sharkbait), Kimo Ball (Freak Accident)

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NEWS

MRR NEWS COMPILED BY LAYLA GIBBON WITH ASSISTANCE FROM MARTIN SORRONDEGUY, SCOTT MOORE.

RIP WILL MUNROE

By Bruce LaBruce from The Torontist

The night before I heard Will Munro had passed on to that great rock'n'roll fag bar in the sky, I was sitting in Trinity Bellwoods Park smoking a joint with my good friend and his, Kevin Hegge, the cute young man who used to work at Rotate This to tell you what cool music to buy.

Earlier in the evening, Kevin and I had gone to see legendary Lydia Lunch at the Royal, whose eloquent spoken-word diatribe against this increasingly fascist world was still ringing in our ears. Long story short, a young cop emerged from a cherry top to inform us snidely that it was against the law for us to be there at 2:30 a.m., and that because there was a random empty beer bottle under our bench, he had the right to search our backpacks. The fact that he failed to find my secret cache of illicit substances, from poppers on up, was the only upside to this sobering encounter, which made me realize, finally, that we are pretty much on the verge of, if not already, living in a police state. (FYI, Toronto Bylaw Section 608-9 B states: "Unless authorized by permit, no person shall use, enter or gather in a park between the hours of 12:01 a.m. and 5:30 a.m." In other words, walking through any public park in Toronto after midnight is illegal and subject to a considerable fine.)

I bring up this incident now because it represents exactly the kind of Toronto—and world—that Will Munro always fought against.

Although Will himself didn't smoke or drink or do drugs—he was always a straight-edge queen, and a vegan to boot—he never passed judgment on anyone who did, and in fact he was all about celebrating various sorts of nonconformist, rebellious, and anti-authoritarian behavior. The loss of Will hits so many of us so hard because he was a warrior in that regard, someone who was offended by the very idea of being boring and conventional. In his own words, he always said he wanted to see "a lot of freak flags flying in Toronto." And his, I say with the utmost admiration, was one of the freakiest.

Will was always an art fag par excellence, even in his OCAD days causing consternation with his choice of medium (found underwear, largely) and his defiant, open queerness. For many years, he volunteered at an LGBT youth crisis hotline, providing an empathetic ear for kids who found it difficult to cope in a homophobic world. Empathy, in fact, was one of the essential parts of Will's character. He was a great listener, and he always made you feel good about yourself. He also rarely had a bad thing to say about anybody. These are exceedingly rare qualities.

Let there be no mistake, though: Sheena was a punk rocker. Will had a very distinct punk sensibility, both in musical taste and attitude, and he enjoyed walking on the wild side. He had a fondness for the macabre and the grotesque, occasionally dressing up in drag as a zombie hag from hell. His infamous guerilla birthday parties, wherein dozens of his friends and comrades would descend in costume on a particular subway car and party while literally hanging from the overhead

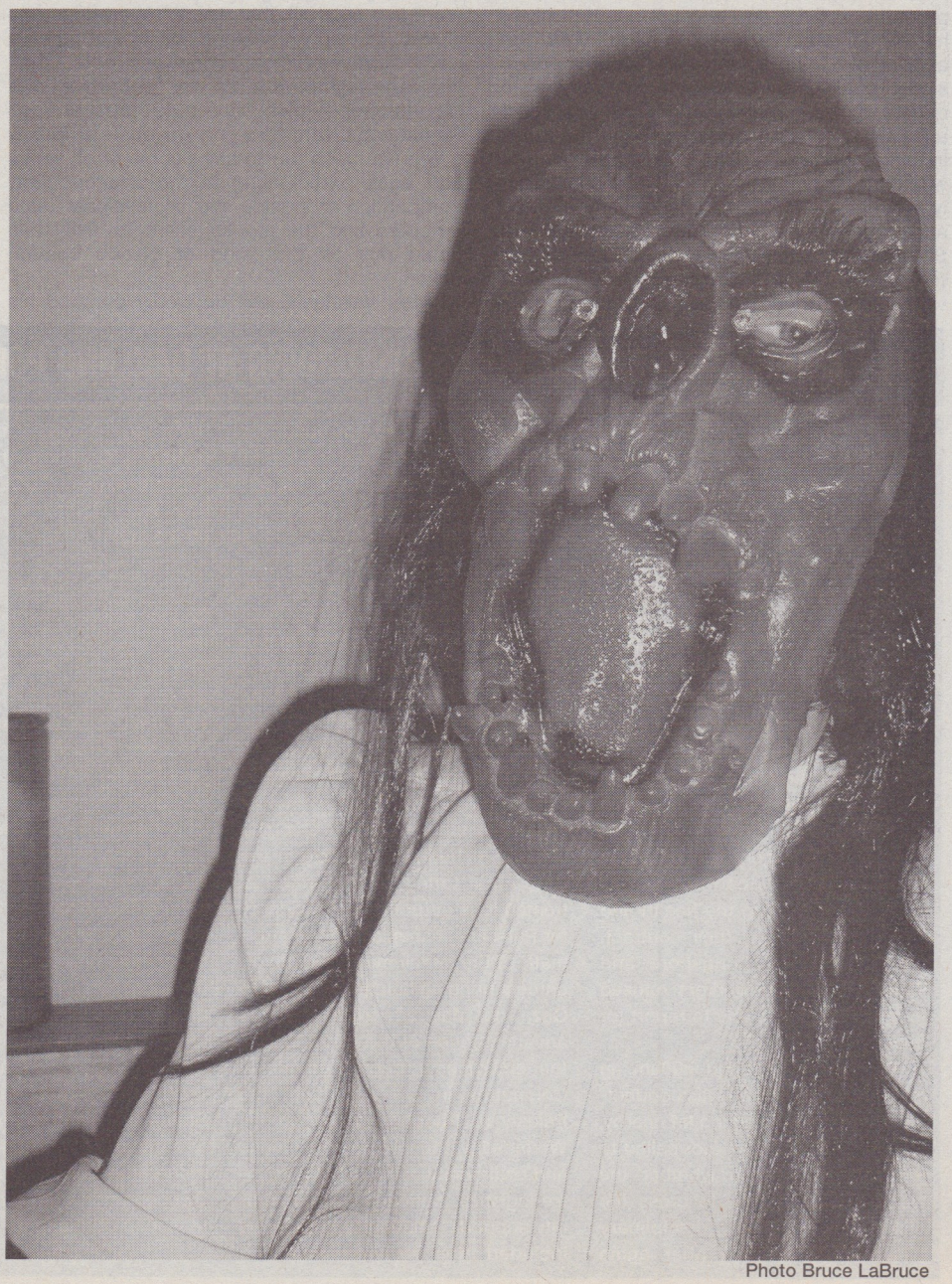

Photo Bruce LaBruce

handrails by their knees, creating general panic and a public nuisance, were just his style. No mindless vandalism, no hostility: just a fun reminder that it's okay to act out in public, to break the rules, to challenge the status quo. It's hard to imagine getting away with something like that in Toronto now. More's the pity.

THE BEAUTIFUL WILL MUNRO
1975 - 2010

Will was a real Renaissance man—a successful artist (collaborating with a host of Toronto's most creative characters, including Luis Jacob and Jeremy Laing), but also a respected DJ, promoter, activist, and restaurateur. He truly hit his stride with Vazaleen, a club night that allowed him to combine all his favourite obsessions: punk and no-wave rock'n'roll music, queers, dykes, trannies, pornography, performance art, go-go dancers, wild costumes, public indecency, strap-on dildos, what have you. He was the only promoter in town who consistently brought in the international royalty of queer and underground performers, everyone from Stink Mitt to Limp Wrist to Vaginal Crème Davis to Cherie Curie to Jayne County to Carol Pope to the Toilet Boys to Kembra Pfahler. (I took a particularly memorable road trip to Niagara Falls with Kembra and Will the day after she performed at Vazaleen, a memory I will always cherish). He also provided an early platform for now more widely known musical forces such as Peaches, The Hidden Cameras, and The Gossip. Vazaleen, which started at the El Mocambo before moving to Lee's Palace, was the first real homo club of note outside the gay ghetto, opening up queer culture to a broader audience of like-minded misfits of all genders and sexual persuasions. In Will's own words: "When I started doing Vazaleen I was like finally there is a space where you can do fucking anything and no one is going to turn their nose up at you." In a nutshell, that was Will's credo.

Will insisted on being inclusive, but he also never betrayed his old school gay roots. Of all his club nights, one of my favourites was Moustache, which he held upstairs at Remingtons, Toronto's only gay male strip bar. It was so much fun to see people of all sexes and ages participating in the amateur strip competition alongside the professional male strippers and the regular clientele. Only Will could pull off that kind of bizarre cultural fusion.

After Vazaleen, Will doggedly pursued his promise of creating life outside the ghetto by turning the Beaver Café (with Lyn McNeil) into the first real hothouse of queer activity on the west side. It was only after several successful years there that he discovered he had a brain tumor. It was a particularly aggressive from of cancer (one more often found in children), and it's a testament to his heart and determination, his unwaveringly positive attitude about everything, and his sheer love of life that he valiantly fought the disease for two years. I think we all believed that if anyone could beat it, against all conceivable odds, Will could.

The last time I had a chance to speak at length with Will was at his art opening at the Paul Petro gallery a couple of months ago. (I've reviewed the show in the latest issue of *C Magazine*.) The cancer had already come back with a vengeance and he was a bit fragile, but what struck me was that he maintained the same commitment to his art, the same positive energy, the same consistency of attitude, and the same generosity of spirit that he'd always had. It was beyond humbling.

From all reports, Will was surrounded by an extremely loyal, loving, and supportive group of family and friends, including his boyfriend Peter, until the end. I know that many people are profoundly and painfully feeling the loss of this gentle, elegant soul, including yours truly. Toronto is already a much, much dimmer and less bearable place without him.

ISRAELI SHIP BLOCKED FROM UNLOADING AT OAKLAND PORT

By Gloria La Riva from www.pslweb.org

In a historic and unprecedented action today, over 800 labor and community activists blocked the gates of the Oakland docks in the early morning hours, prompting longshore workers to refuse to cross the picket lines where they were scheduled to unload an Israeli ship. From 5:30am to 9:30am, a militant and spirited protest was held in front of four gates of the Stevedore Services of America, with people chanting non-stop, "Free, Free Palestine, Don't Cross the Picket Line, and "An injury to one is an injury to all, the apartheid wall is going to fall." Citing the health and safety provisions of their contract, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union workers refused to cross the picket line to report for duty.

Between 8:30am and 9:00am, an emergency arbitration was conducted at the Maersk parking lot nearby, with an "instant" arbitrator called to the site, to rule on whether the workers could refuse to cross the picket line without disciplinary measure. At 9:15am, after again reviewing the protests of hundreds at each gate, the arbitrator ruled in favor of the union that it was indeed unsafe for the workers to enter the docks.

To loud cheers of "Long Live Palestine!" Jess Ghannam of Free Palestine Alliance and Richard Becker of the ANSWER Coalition (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism) announced the victory. Ghannam said, "This is truly historic, never before has an Israeli ship been blocked in the United States!" The news that a container ship from the Zim Israeli shipping line was scheduled to arrive in the Bay Area today has sparked a tremendous outpouring of solidarity for Palestine, especially in the aftermath of the Israeli massacre of volunteers bringing humanitarian aid to Gaza on May 30. With 10 days advance notice of the ship's arrival, the emergency "Labor/Community Committee in Solidarity with the Palestinian People" was set up. On Wednesday, 110 people from unions and community came to help organize logistics, outreach and community support. Initiating organizations included the Al-Awda Palestine Right to Return Coalition, the ANSWER Coalition, the Bay Area Labor Chapter of USLAW, and the Bay Area Labor Committee for Peace and Justice.

This week, the San Francisco Labor Council and Alameda Labor Council passed resounding resolutions denouncing Israel's blockade of Gaza. Both councils sent out public notices of the dock action. The ILWU has a proud history of extending its solidarity to struggling peoples the world over. In 1984, as the Black masses of South Africa were engaged in an intense struggle against apartheid, the ILWU refused for a record-setting 10 days to unload cargo from the South African "Ned Lloyd" ship. Despite million-dollar fines imposed on the union, the longshore workers held strong, providing a tremendous boost to the anti-apartheid movement.

Today's Oakland action, in the sixth largest port in the United States, is the first of several protests and work stoppages planned around the world, including Norway, Sweden and South Africa. It is sure to inspire others to do the same.

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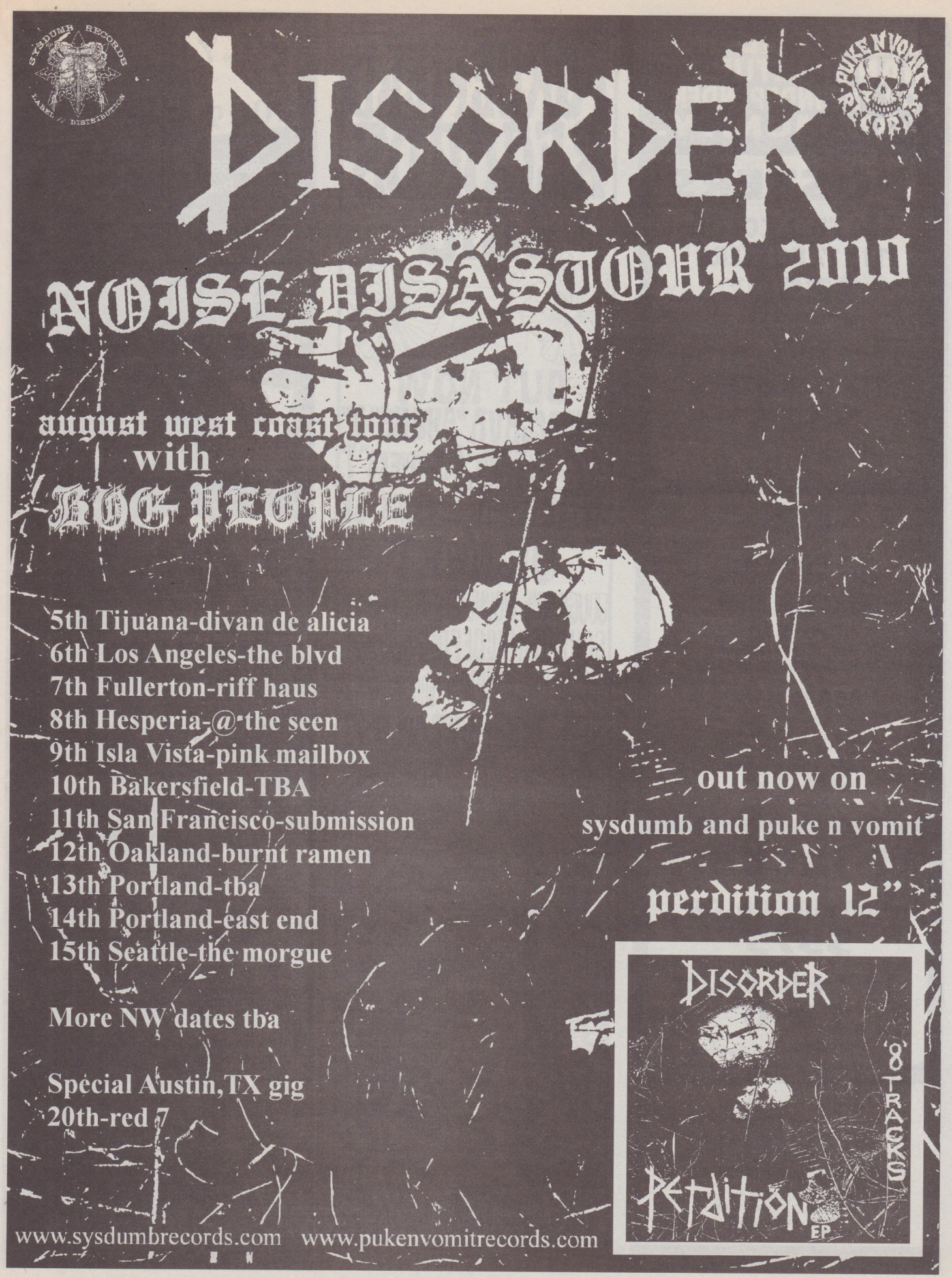
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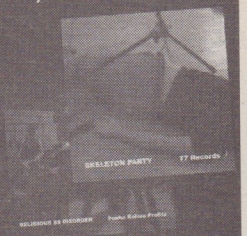

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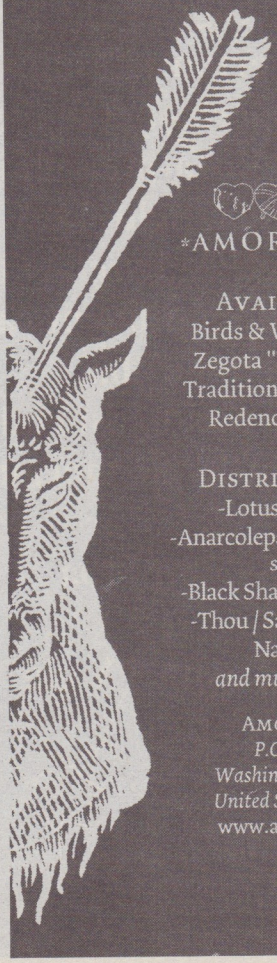

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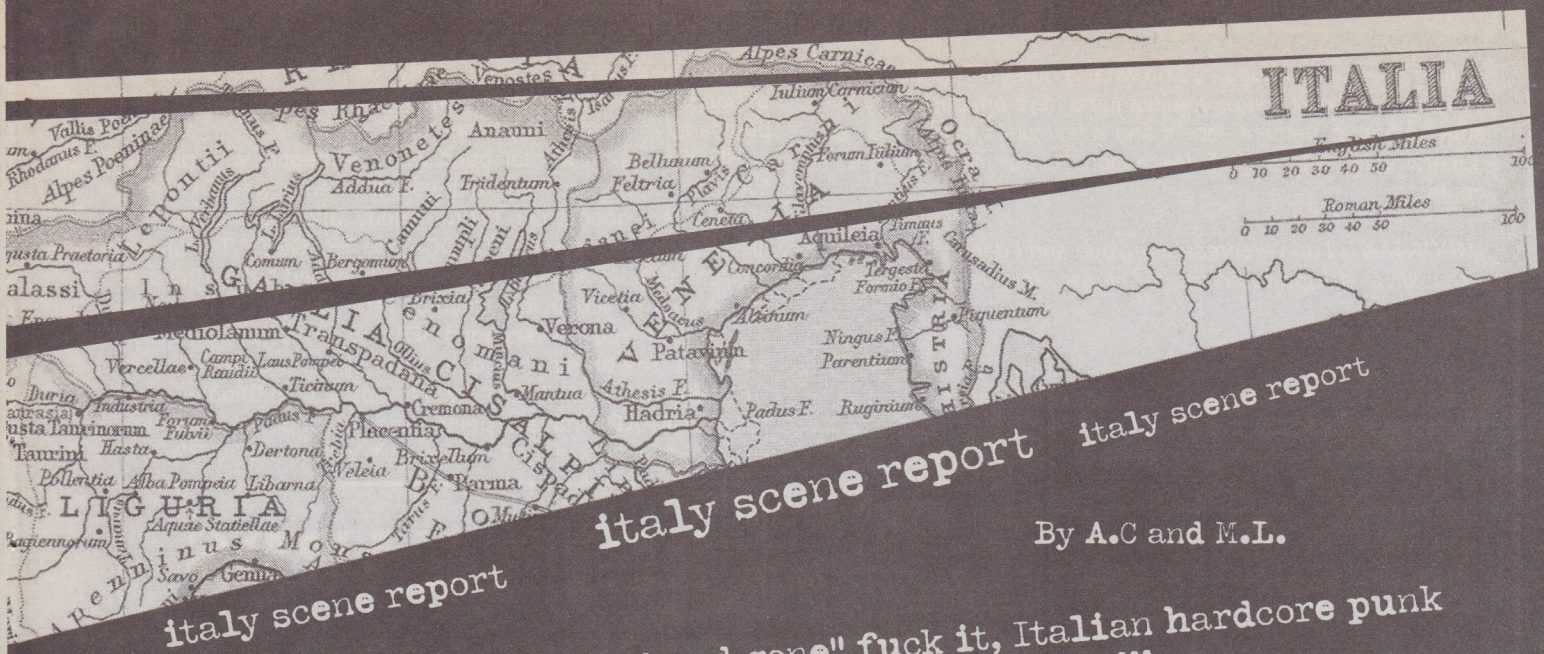


italy scene report

italy scene report italy scene report

By A.C and M.L.

"The good old days are dead and gone" fuck it, Italian hardcore punk scene is still alive and it kicks ass!!!

This is not a trip through the desolate frozen Scandinavian lands with all the damn amazing bands we all know. And it's not even a journey through the chaotic Japanese streets with all the crazy noisy bands we all love. This is not the US and not even Europe. This is Italy, love it or hate it. This is a story about how miserable it is to be punk in this country, how difficult it is to keep on playing and promoting our music, and to get out of these fucking borders.

First thing I have to say is that in Italy it's not really easy to be a punk rocker after you turn 25. People are really narrow-minded here and care more about external aspects than substance. People here judge you if you have a strange haircut, if you wear black clothes or if you simply say what you think. We have the Vatican, a very corrupt government, three different police corpses, the army on the streets, and lots of fascist, big divisions inside the left-wing movement. Life here isn't that easy for punks, and it's even worse when you go down to the south.

Like I said before, 25-years-old is the last step. You're not a kid anymore. You're considered an adult. This means you'll have to find a job and start a career or the crowd will point at you as an idler. You'll have to marry or you'll be considered a "faggot." You'll have to find a nice house or you'll be considered dirty and homeless. I've seen kids pretending to be the biggest and most "true" punk rockers on this planet, wearing super-studded jackets, tiger skin trousers, sporting 40 cm tall mohawks. Then they turn into the same shit they were preaching against when they were punks. I've seen anarchists turn into Nazis. I've seen straight-edge kids turn into heroin addicts. You've seen them all too. Here, the reason is the one I've listed before: you have time to be a rebel and play with your life, but not after 25!

Like everywhere else, getting a job here is not that easy. At least, in all the other countries I've been to, (and there are a lot), punks go to work with their dirty clothes, their mohawks or dreadlocks, their studded jackets, their tattoos. Here you simply can't, for the same old reason. So, if you wanna take it easy with your life, just change your goddamn clothes and your haircut. Otherwise, you'll be entering the gates of hell!

What I just described can be seen as a hopeless country for punks. Hopefully, there are still a good number of people believing in what they are doing, living in a total DIY way or simply working to get money enough to travel, start bands, supporting the scene. Being punk is difficult, but for sure, there's plenty of ways to survive.

For those who have never been to Italy before, I can briefly describe what it has been like during the last 30 years. The '80s were amazing, with an incredible DIY HC punk movement and bands/squats everywhere. Then, heroin and state oppression simply infected and killed it, leaving few survivors. The no-mans land era of the '90s is a gloomy memory: few venues, few bands, a total decay of DIY spirit, and a lack of substance and interest in doing better things. Few bands were touring Italy because it simply wasn't worth it. Few bands were actively playing here and the audience was decimated. It's only in the middle of 2000 that things started changing, not from above, but inside first:

Italy remains a shitty country for political reasons. If we wanted the scene to survive and shine again, we realized we had to work from inside, raising kids with DIY giving them new perspectives and fresh inputs. We, old punks, realized we couldn't do anything without a new energy. Step by step, gigs after gigs, Italy started this second punk wave brighter than ever. The '80s were gone, but the spirit continues stronger than ever. Punx not dead.

It's not easy to be updated on what is going on here unless you are interested in it or you just jump here on tour. I'll try to sum up bands, venues, labels and a few zines to give you a general view, with a brief description, some info and useful contacts.

IMPORTANT! I don't represent anyone and I don't claim to be exhaustive. If I forgot someone, please, forgive me, I didn't mean it.

Bands

Before starting, I want to say a few things about the way I've listed and reviewed all the bands.

I have my personal taste. If I haven't listed your band, it is not because I don't like you or because I hate you, it's just because I don't know you. Second, I basically live 100% in the scene; organizing gigs, playing, running a label, driving for bands, etc. I'm a DIY fundamentalist. If your band is borderline between the "mainstream-wanna-be" and the "DIY-just-because-no-big-labels-have-signed-me-yet", well, forget being listed here. Third, if your band has 37 visits on your Myspace profile, don't blame me if I haven't talked about you. You may need to get out of your practice room and play some gigs. 99% of the bands I've listed have records out and a good number of live shows under their belts.

Less talk, more rock, and here we go!

Northern Italy

Piemonte District

In the city of Torino the situation is complicated. You may know it from the '80s, thanks to bands like NEGAZIONE, 5° BRACCIO, CONTRAZIONE, NERORGASMO and DECLINO. It's difficult to get here to play if you come from a different town. The bands from that city, hardly ever play in other cities. The local scene is pretty sad. Forty people at a Subhumans gig is not a good average.

HAVOC come from here. They play nihilistic dark hardcore in the vein of NERORGASMO and have a couple of CDs out, so far. I've never seen this band live for the reasons I've said before, but I'm sure they're still playing, since they are looking for labels to release their records. www.myspace.com/HavocPunkTorino

MEMENTO MORI (ex-CONFUSIONE) play nice hardcore punk in the typical Torino style with hermetic lyrics. They have a 7" out on Agipunk and a split LP with MILKADD. No contact information found.

MILKADD are a youth combo that play straight, fast hardcore. They have a demo CD and a split LP with MOMENTO MORI. No contacts found

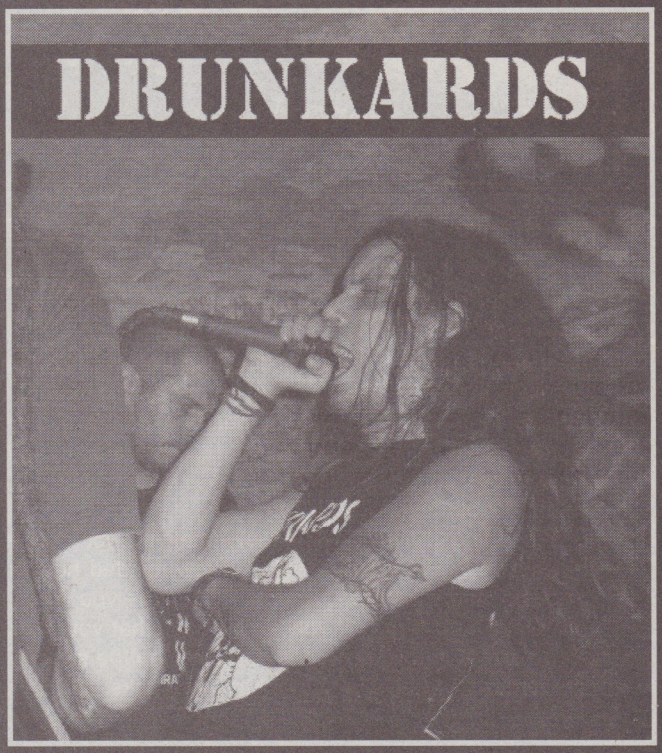
BLEEDING come from the city of Asti, which close to Torino. They deliver a good UK '82 protest hardcore punk. They are not very active anymore, but they have CDs out on various Italian labels. www.myspace.com/BleedingPunx

CRIPPLE BASTARDS, from Asti, are probably the most popular and controversial Italian band of all time. They don't need an introduction. Check them out yourself. www.myspace.com/CrippleBastards

The city of Alessandria has always delivered a good amount of bands, however most of them never reach a good level of popularity — even if they deserve it.

BHOPAL is an all-star band with five people who play in five different bands, some with very different styles. BHOPAL plays a very good crust, full of melody, and metallic parts. A great cross between HELLSHOCK and TRAGEDY. They have a promo CD out and a full LP will be released before the end of the year by Iconoclast Records. The singer and the bass player used to be in a very good HC band called INSULT, check them out. The drummer and the bass player are still active in DRUNKARDS and JILTED. www.myspace.com/Bhopal

DRUNKARDS have a demo tape; a couple of cassettes — one that is live and 3-way-split with KONTATTO and



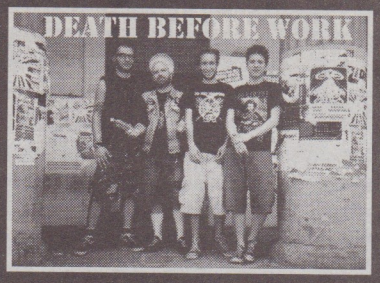
RIFIUTO; 3 split 7"s — one with NIKOTINA, one with DIRTY POWER GAME, and one with CANCER SPREADING; and a full-length CD. They play very technical metallic crust with crazy fucked-up lyrics focused on a post-nuclear vision of the world, loaded as an alcohol freight train. www.myspace.com/DrunkardsRock

JILTED are probably the oldest band from Alessandria who plays great, fast HC with some crusty riffs and excellent lyrics! The guitarist used to be in PERMANENT SCAR, a band from the late '80s. I wish they would play more than they do! Their discography consists of two 7"s, *La Mia Realta* and *Follia Omicida*, on Angry Records — which is the guitar player's label; a split LP with MURDER DISCO X (Agipunk); and a discography CD. They're working on a new LP and looking for labels. Get in touch! www.myspace.com/AngryRecords

Lombardia District

Milano used to be a neuralgic center for hardcore punk in the '80s with all the bands who were hanging out at the mighty Virus Squat (WRETCHED, RAPPRESAGLIA, CRASH BOX, DISPERAZIONE, etc). Now the scene seems to be pretty dead, but there's still something interesting going on.

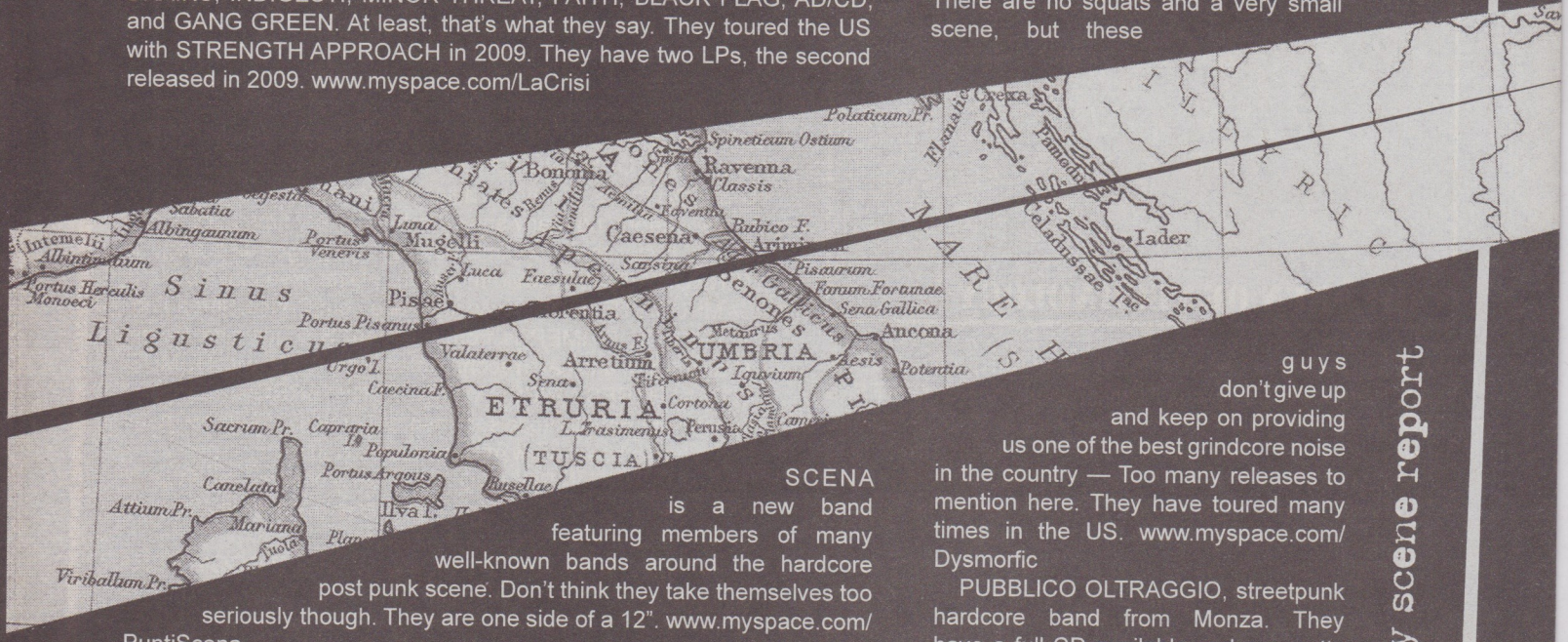
DEATH BEFORE WORK! are the kings of Italian fast thrashcore, with very funny lyrics. Everybody in that band has at least one other project. They have a full CD on SOA; a split 7" with COMRADES; a 12" (*Messageboard Punks on a Rope*); a demo CD-R; and several songs on various compilations. www.myspace.com/DeathBeforeWork



FOREST YELL play a good mix of obscure doom, black metal and more neurotic stuff. And they have a member in common with DEATH BEFORE WORK! I think they only have a split CD with Mastic. www.myspace.com/ForestYell

MASTIC has another a member in common with DEATH BEFORE WORK! and FORECT YELL. They are on the metallic side of hardcore punk. They have a tape, split CD with FOREST YELL, and they tour often. www.myspace.com/MasticYouth

LA CRISI were born on the ashes of the early '90s band SOTTOPRESSIONE and their hardcore sound is influenced by BAD BRAINS, INDIGESTI, MINOR THREAT, FAITH, BLACK FLAG, AD/CD, and GANG GREEN. At least, that's what they say. They toured the US with STRENGTH APPROACH in 2009. They have two LPs, the second released in 2009. www.myspace.com/LaCrisi



SCENA is a new band featuring members of many well-known bands around the hardcore post punk scene. Don't think they take themselves too seriously though. They are one side of a 12". www.myspace.com/PuntiScena

CRASH BOX, yeah, CRASH BOX is still alive and kicking. They have no new records, just playing some good live shows since their reunion in 2006. www.myspace.com/CrashBoxMilano

MISERIA, from Varese, features the bass player from KONTATTO playing guitar and singing. MISERIA play a great hardcore punk attack influenced by old Italian tradition. They have smart political lyrics with a great punk attitude. Only a demo CD-R, but they need to work on more! www.myspace.com/MiseriaHC

PIOGGIA NERA, from Pavia, are one of my favorite bands these days. Musically, they remind me of NEROGASMO, but they are also influenced by THE WRETCHED, MISFITS, TSOL, and AMEBIX. They are not a compilation band. Their sound is a mix of all those mentioned, but they include a lot of their own personality above all else. Their lyrics are an amazing mix of hate, desperation, nihilism, fear and depression. They've released a demo tape and a full LP, *Teatri Di Menzogne*. They're working on a new LP that will be released by Agipunk as soon as the singer is out of jail. www.myspace.com/PioggiaNera

CILICIUM, from Brescia, are one of the few stench core bands from the Boot. They have a demo and a promo tape/CD-R available, which delivers some good tunes — but the sound is terrible. As far as I know, they are releasing a couple of 7"s in 2010. Live they're a blast and remind me a lot to SANCTUM. www.myspace.com/Cilicium

THE SMASHROOMS come from the same city as Cilicium, but have a totally different style. They are a political hardcore punk band in the vein of HAVE HEART and have many gigs and tours under their belt. They have a couple of official releases, a CD and a 7", available. Check them out. www.myspace.com/Smashrooms

DYSMORFIC come from Mantova, a city where nothing is really happening. There are no squats and a very small scene, but these guys don't give up and keep on providing us one of the best grindcore noise in the country — Too many releases to mention here. They have toured many times in the US. www.myspace.com/Dysmorfic

PUBBLICO OLTRAGGIO, streetpunk hardcore band from Monza. They have a full CD available and are pretty popular within the spikes and studded mohawk punks. www.myspace.com/PubblicoOltraggio

Trentino/Alto Adige - Veneto - Friuli Venezia Giulia Districts

As far as I know, the city of Rovereto has always delivered a good number of bands, but I really don't know how many of them are still active, releasing records and playing live shows.

LUDD is probably the most well known band hailing from Rovereto. Like all the other combos, they are incredibly politically involved and music is a form of protest. The members are not kids anymore and they play a mix of KINA and 7 SECONDS. The guitar player is a

italy scene report

former member of YOUNGBLOOD and RELIGIOUS VOMIT, has also played bass for IMPACT, and still plays guitar for LA CONGUIRA. No contact information found.

MINKIONS, from Padova, play thrashcore like DRI, mixed with an old style speed metal riff. They only have a CD available; some songs on compilations with CHILDREN OF TECHNOLOGY, ARMAGEDON and NUCLEAR FROST; and have done a small European tour. A cool release is coming out soon — stay tuned! www.myspace.com/Minkions

CHILDREN OF TECHNOLOGY, from Padova, is pretty trendy now and they are playing at their best. They, too, share a member with MINKIONS — the bass player who sings for MINKIONS. They play raging rock'n'roll fuelled with metal infected punk. Think of early INEPSY, MOTORHEAD, and

GATES. They've released a demo tape/CD-R; a live DVD; a split 7" with CANCER SPREADING; a split 7" with GATES; a split 7" with BASTARDATOR; a four way split 7" — "speed-punk-metal-crust" with ARMAGEDOM, MINKIONS, and NUCLEAR FROST; the *Road Warrior* 12" EP; the brand new, *It's Time to Face the Doomsday* LP. The most active band in Italy! www.myspace.com/ChildrenOfTechnology

VIVERE MERDA is from Udine, and are pretty appreciated by the Italian punks. Their style is raw punk AUS ROTTEN, with political and drunk-y lyrics. They have a split LP with ANXTV Check them out. www.myspace.com/VivereMerda

EU'S ARSE, the old proto crust band, is still alive. After a 20 year break, they've reformed and have changed their singer. They have a new CD out on the Japanese label, MCR, called *2008*, and another out on SOA, *Adesso Come Allora.* www.myspace.com/EusArse77

OSDS, from Gorizia, play awesome straight-in-ya-fucking-face punk hardcore, not dissimilar to DEFIANCE and early AUS ROTTEN. They sing in English and shout against the usual topics we all love to shout against. They share the drummer with VIVERE MERDA. www.myspace.com/OSDS

italy scene report

SMART COPS hail from Venezia and are another all-star band. The singer used to be in the screamo combo BLUID, the drummer used to be in ENDLESS INERTIA, the guitar player was in BAN X THIS, and the bass player was in LA PIOVRA, OHUZARU, and L'AMICO DI MARTUCCI. Musically, they are a fast hardcore band with fun topics. They go on stage with Carabinieri trousers, wearing matching shirts. They have two 7"s available and have toured the East Coast. www.myspace.com/SmartCops

Emilia Romagna District

This is probably the punkest area in the whole country! Maybe it's because of the old left wing tradition, or maybe it's because the water is healthier, or the fruits tastier, but the fact is — the most prolific, active and popular Italian bands come from here.

In Piacenza and Parma, there's a huge punk rock, garage punk, street punk, and Oi! scenes, but the lack of squats and the ambiguity of some of these bands never really catch my attention. I've heard many times that Nazi Skins and other dodgy people hang out at every gig — no thanks — I'm not gonna waste time on such bands.

NO WHITE RAG is from Modena and they are the kings of Italian protest street punk! They remind me of the VARUKERS and DEFIANCE. They are active, politically involved and very good musicians. A demo, a 7" and a CD/LP are all they have available though. www.myspace.com/NoWhiteRagPunx

CANCER SPREADING, stench core from Modena, is one of the most active bands. They started in late 2007 and have released three split 7"s with CHILDREN OF TECHNOLOGY, CRUEL STORM and DRUNKARDS and a split LP with DISKONTROLL. They've also toured Europe a couple of times, performing many shows in Italy. Every time I see them, they're better than the time before. The singer also sings in TERROR FIRMER, while the guitar player also plays bass in CAMPUS STERMINII. www.myspace.com/CancerSpreading

TERROR FIRMER is from Modena, Bologna and Rome. They are new and have recently released a split 7" with HUMUS. TOTAL HERESY/RIPCORD/UNSEEN TERROR, hardcore thrash with double vocals, thrash drumming, chainsaw guitar and a harsh bass. www.myspace.com/TFirmer

JESUS AIN'T IN POLAND, also from Modena is a grindcore band. They've released one CD and are pretty active live. www.myspace.com/JesusAintInPoland

INFAMIA, from Sassuolo, play in a similar PIOGGIA NERA style, with dark punk rock political and nihilistic lyrics. They've released a CD and a split 7" with DISCORDIA. www.myspace.com/InfamiaModena

Bologna is definitely the center of Emilia Romagna and, probably, of the whole Italian hardcore punk scene. This city used to have a huge punk scene in the late '70s/early '80s and then everything died — until the beginning of the new millennium. The following bands come from here.

KONTATTO, one of the oldest punk bands in Italy. Started in '98 and never split up, even if they faced many line-up changes. They started as a WRETCHED/DISORDER clone with more melodic territories and are one of the few real D-beat bands in Italy. They sing about war, government, protest, vivisection, abuses of power, etc. They've released a split CD-R with

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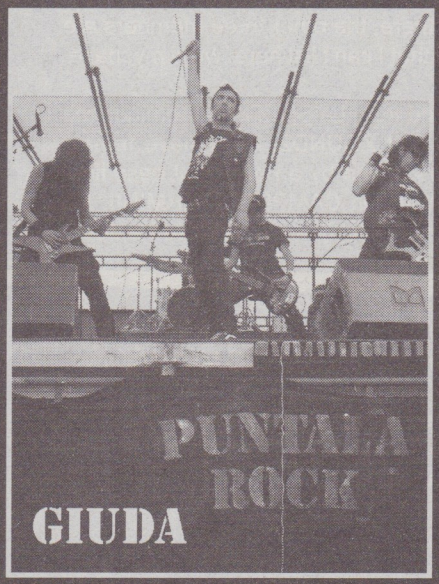
PHP; split 7"s with GIFTGAS, AGATHOCLES and BEYOND DESCRIPTION; a three way split tape with DRUNKARDS and RIFIUTO; and a four way split 7" with CONTRASTO, CAMPUS STERMINII and LE TORMENTA; and *Disillusione* LP on Agipunk. They've toured several times in Europe and in 2009 on the East Coast. They're currently working on a new LP and a US tour for the fall of 2010. www.myspace.com/Kontatto

CAMPUS STERMINII shares the drummer and the singer/guitar player with KONTATTO. They are one of the most active bands in Italy and have a split LP with DISGUSTING LIES, on Agipunk; a split 7" with NULLA OSTA; a full LP, *Life is a Nightmarish Struggle* on Agipunk; and several songs on various compilations such as *AlConfino* and *El Libertario*. They play old school UK and Scandi crust core, mixed with speed metal and BLACK SABBATH-ish heavy metal. Their lyrics are about miserable existences, fear of death, society, etc. They've toured Europe four times. www.myspace.com/CampusSterminii

GIUDA is an all-star band! The vocalist is the owner of Agipunk and used to sing for DDI; one guitarist is another Agipunk member and used to be in many bands such as DISARM and DISPREZZO, GROEBELAR, and UNSUNG; the other guitarist is also in KONTATTO and CAMPUS STERMINII and he's the third Agipunk member; the drummer is in HAEMOPHAGUS; and the bass player sings in POST FATA RESURGO and used to sing and play guitar in NAGASAKI NIGHTMARE. What else? They have two full LPs on Agipunk and a 7". They've toured Europe three times and have been to the US. They are working on a new LP and a new U.S. tour for August 2010. www.myspace.com/GiudaiScariota



ED is the king of real crossover. They used to be a clone of Italian HC gods INDIGESTI, but now they sound more like MUNICIPAL WASTE. Incredibly young, they've play for years and are extremely tight live. A fucking good band!!! They've released *Pensa a quanto puo' fare schifo questa società per averci ridotto a fare musica come questa...*— a CD-R from 2001; *Non placate il nostro odio*, a CD-R from 2002; *C'è chi di indifferenza muore* CD-R from 2003; *Possibilità Deviate* - a CD-R from 2003; three way split CD-R from 2003, with CRASHED OUT/ED/HUNGRY ACID; a split 7" *Sumo/ED* from 2005; *Il loro odio, la nostra lotta 1980-2005*, a 12" LP; *The Fast Side of Italy*, a CD from 2006; *Nailed to the Board*, a12" LP from 2007; *Senza Ragione*, a 7" from 2009 on Don't Need Records. www.myspace.com/NailedToTheBoard

BAN X THIS shares the singer with ED and the guitarist of SMART COPS and used to be a California clone hardcore punk band. They split up some months ago, but everyone in Bologna is waiting for their return to the stage. Influenced by BLACK FLAG, ADOLESCENTS, BL'AST, and BAD BRAINS, they have a pretty huge discography: a demo from 2005; a CD-R from 2005; a promo from 2006; *Bleeding Teeth & Burning Horses* CD from 2006; *Creepy Crawl* 7" EP from 2006; *The Fast Side of Italy* CD from 2006; *Psychotic Reactions* CD from 2007 on Agipunk, NLHC, and Give Blood Records; BANxTHIS! self-titled 12"LP from 2007 on Agipunk Records; *How to Destroy a Quiet Sleep* 7" from 2008 on Agipunk and Don't Need Records. www.myspace.com/BanXThis

MARNERO were created from the ashes of LAGHETTO and play post hardcore. It's definitely not my cup of tea, but they are good friends of mine and they are DIY fundamentalists, like me. They've released one split LP with SI NON SEDES IS. www.myspace.com/Marnero

LADY TORNADO shares the guitarist with MARNERO and play chaotic grindcore/screamo. They've released one split 10" with THE INFARTO SCHEISSE and a new picture disc with killer artwork so far. www.myspace.com/LadyTornado

NABAT are the oldest Italian Oi! Band. Even if I'm not a big lover of that style, NABAT are simply legends and their tunes are great. After many line up changes, some breaks and many records, they're still playing live shows. www.myspace.com/OiNabatOi

IL MALE is an evil combo who have been around for two years. They play an original crossover between hardcore punk, crust and melodic black metal. They are involved in political struggles, and their lyrics strictly reflect their political attitude. The guitarist also plays for LE TORMENTA and they have released a CD. No contact information available.

SUMO are another post core band with FUGAZI style. I think they've released an eight track demo tape; *La Libera Danza Quotidiana* CD; *What the Hell We're Still Doing Here – 1993/2010 Rumble Fish 10 Years of DIY* compilation CD, SUMO/ED split 7"; *CNA Compilation Benefit* CD; *Coverones – A Ramones Tribute Album* compilation CD and LP; and *Surrogate* CD. www.myspace.com/SumoHC

REPULSIONE describe themselves as "Anti-Human Power Violence". Their music is double bass turbo thrash/grind hardcore with political lyrics. They have an endless discography: a self-titled CD-R; a split CD with GOE; a live split tape with DYSMORFIC; a split 7" with AON; a split 7" with SICK TERROR; a live self-titled split tape with SARKOFACHOCRSS88 / HERPES VAGINAL / 2 MINUTA DREKA; a split 7" with AGATHOCLES; *The Beginning of Violence* CD; a split 7" with ISOLAMENTO. www.myspace.com/Repulsione

2 MINUTA DREKA is the only porn gore grind band that deserve to be mentioned. They provoke, but they are really nice people that support the DIY scene, set up gigs and also go to demos. Their discography is too long. Check it out here: www.myspace.com/2MinutaDreka

There are a lot of other bands in Bologna that maybe deserve to be mentioned, but, since they just have no releases, or very few, land they're not so active (especially outside of the country), I will just introduce their listings ad web links: www.myspace.com/IsolamentoHC, www.myspace.com/Linterno, www.myspace.com/LyoneStatesHC, www.myspace.com/IntoTheBaobab3...and the list can go on and on, there are so many bands in town!

LA QUIETE from Forlì is one of the most popular Italian bands on the planet. Their style is probably screamo and their discography is huge. I'm not really keen on that music, but they are good friends and are totally DIY. Members of Raein are in this band. www.myspace.com/LaQuiete and www.myspace.com/Raein

CONTRASTO is another old combo from Cesena. They have a long discography and have done many European tours for these anarcho fastcore legends! They probably don't need any introduction, so, if you want, check them out at their website. www.ContrastoHC.com

LE TORMENTA, from Forlì, play earthgrind, a complex mix of emoviolence, chaotic grind and hardcore punk, with green anarchist lyrics. The members are very known in the scene, they also play or were members of REBELDE, IL MALE, MEMORIES OF APOCALYPSE, and ROID. Their discography includes *L'unico Elemento* LP/CD; *Resest* 7"/CD-R split with GARGANTHA; a 7" split with CONTRASTO and various songs on compilations like *Verso la Fine* CD; *Disawr* cassette tape; *AlConfino Squat Benefit* 7", *Se Non Ora, Quando* CD and *La Nostra Scelta* CD. www.LeTormenta.com

GREEN RIVER KILLER and CRUEL STORM are two young bands featuring members of CAMPUS STERMINII, CONTRASTO and VIOLENT SUTURA. CAMPUS STERMINII and CONTRASTO is a turbo rock'n'roll D-beat band, not too dissimilar from INEPSY. The latter bands are total "Country of Sweden"-style and Anti-Cimex D-beat. They have a split 7" out with CANCER SPREADING. www.myspace.com/TheGreenRiverKiller and www.Myspace.com/CruelStorm

IMPACT from Ferrara don't need any introduction. If you know them, you need to see a doctor and you must check them out at the following link. www.myspace.com/Impact1980

Liguria District

Not the Mecca of Italian punk for sure…only a few bands come from here, and most of them play just every once in a while.

DOWNRIGHT is from Genova, and it has been ages since I've seen them live. They play old school hardcore with female vocals. They released a self-titled 7", a split CD with FLOP DOWN and a full-length CD. No contact information available.

KLASSE KRIMINALE from Savona, is another very old street punk/Oi! band from 1985. Well, only the singer comes from there, the other three members are from Bologna. They have a huge discography that I can't list here. www.myspace.com/PrimaKlasseKriminale

ANXTV is a very popular anarcho-punk band from La Spezia that reminds me of LOST CHEERES, LIBERTY, CONFLICT, and ZOUNDZ. They have female vocals, one-two beat drums, and noisy guitars driven by an excellent bass line. The guitarist of this band used to be in NSA and in CAMPUS STERMINII. He currently lives in Finland, but the band is still together. They've released a demo CD-R, a four way split LP, a full 7", and a split LP with VIVIERE MERDA. www.myspace.com/AnxTV

CRIME GANG BANG has been active since the '80s. This band delivers some old school hardcore with a lot of melody. Their discography is also pretty long — check it out here: www.myspace.com/CGBHardcore

Tuscany

Is a huge district, but very little is happening there. Well, there are a lot of bands playing, but most of them don't record anything, they don't tour, they don't practice enough and they suck live. I'm just gonna talk about the few bands that deserve it.

CARLOS DUNGA is a band formed by five fucking Fiorentina football team freaks. It's a mix of thrash fucking core and some Brazilian folk music. They've released one EP, but there is more to come from this new band! www.myspace.com/CarlosDunga

ALFATEC, also from Firenze, kicks our asses with a good mix of rock'n'roll hardcore punk. Really fun on stage, they've released only one 7" and have toured Europe two or three times. www.myspace.com/Alfatec

NOIA, again from Firenze, plays kinda black metal punk in the vein of the latest DARK THRONE. They formed a few months ago and they already have a full-length CD. Get it or you are a loser! www.myspace.com/NoiaNera

PISCIOSANGUE is HC punk from Florence. They have a split 7" out with INTO THE BAOBAB. I've never seen them live. www.myspace.com/Pisciosangue

Center of Italy

Lazio District

The center of Italy has always provided a good number of bands since the early days of punk rock. There are really too many bands, that due to distance from where I live and, I kinda ignore, but here is a short list, check them out: MITHRA (www.myspace.com/MithraBand), SI NON SEDES IS (www.myspace.com/SiNonSedesIs), CONCRETE (www.myspace.com/Operamara), INFERNO (www.myspace.com/InfernoGrindNRoll), and COMRADES.

TEAR ME DOWN from Viterbo play 100% militant hardcore á la '90s. They have many records out and many tours under their belt. Not my favorite band at all, but definitely one of the most important bands in the Italian HC punk panorama. www.myspace.com/TearMeDown

NEID comes from Viterbo, and their drummer is also in TEAR ME DOWN. They are a young band and play fastcore, fast as fuck. They've already toured around Europe and have a split CD with CHARLI and an upcoming split 7" with CONTRASTO. www.myspace.com/NeidXXX

GAS ATTACK, from Rome, shares the singer with TEAR ME DOWN. They play old school hardcore punk in an excellent way. The singing is Jello Biafra-like and the music is extremely good. On their first CD there's a cover of the Oi! band BLITZ. They have a new 7" is coming. Keep on rocking, dudes! www.myspace.com/Gsttck

POST FATA RESURGO is one of the best bands around the Boot nowadays. Although they've been playing for many years now, they have only one split 7", with MITHRA, and a full length LP on Agipunk. Their sound is a mix between new wave crust core, (like TRAGEDY, WOLFBRIGADE, FROM ASHES RISE, and KONTROVERS), some Swedish melodic death metal played extremely well, and sung in Italian. They changed the singer some time ago and the new one is a well-known dude who used to play in POISONED SCROTUM, NAGASAKI NIGHTMARE and now in GIUDA. www.myspace.com/PostFata

DIRTY POWER GAME is definitely my favorite Italian band. Two thousand rpm crust core at it's best. Think of DISRUPT and ENT, but faster and tighter! Great guitar

worships, great tunes, great fucking vocals! Everything's perfect in this band! They have three LP's out on Agipunk (the last one, *Crepa!*, is a pure bomb of energy!), many split 7"s (with WOJCZECH, DISARM, and DRUNKARDS), and a great demo CD-R. They've been the first members of the Italo-crust family to cross the ocean and infect the USA with their riffs n' beats. Now they're on hiatus, but I'm positive things will work out soon. www.myspace.com/DirtyPowerGame

Other bands from Rome and surrounding cities are TSUBO (www.myspace.com/tsub0) and BUFFALO GRILLZ (www.myspace.com/BuffaloGrillz), but you'd better check 'em out. I don't have many things to say about them except that they're all good dudes!

Marche District

HUMUS is the new band born from the ashes of the mighty COPROFAGIA. These friends of mine play catchy fast grindcore. They have two demo tapes, a CD-R and two split 7"s with NIS and TERROR FIRMER out, plus they've toured a couple of times through Europe. Not bad for a band that's been around for only two years. www.myspace.com/Humus071

NECROVOMIT share some members with HUMUS and play death metal. Total DIY attitude, but I'm definitely not into metal stuff, so check them out if you are! www.myspace.com/TheTrueNecrovomit

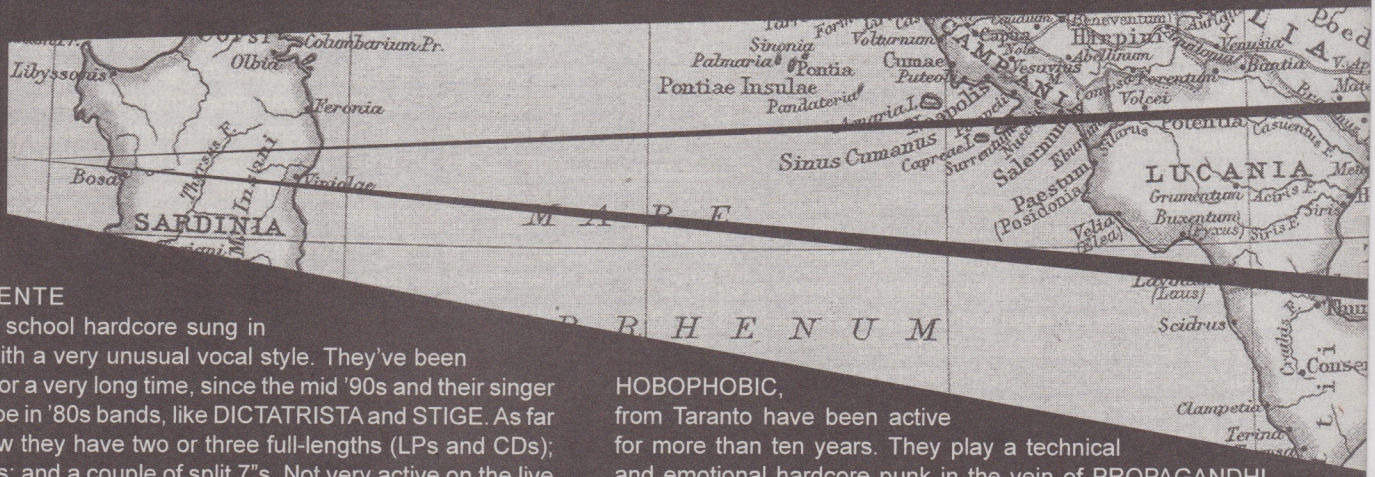
QUARTO MORTO is another cool fastcore band in the vein of INFEST and DROPDEAD that come from the north of the district. Nice cool dudes are always available for benefit gigs and they have nice DIY attitude. They've been around for some years now and have two 7"s; a split 7" with MR. MURRUNGIO; several songs on compilations; and a new discography CD that has just been released. Keep on kicking ass, buddies! www.myspace.com/UnQuartoMorto

South

Not much is really happening here. Unfortunately in Italy, there are big differences between the Northern and the Southern part of the country. In this area, there's a big lack of work, people are more narrow-minded, and there's more respect for religion and old traditions. All different kinds of mafia play a big role in the administration of life down here and, of course, punks are not welcome. The few bands that come to my mind are:

Puglia District

NIS, from Bari, is a nice crustcore combo with a bit of a metal touch. Pretty active, they play shows in their area and have a split 7" with Humus out. www.myspace.com/NisCrust



AFFLUENTE
play old school hardcore sung in Italian with a very unusual vocal style. They've been around for a very long time, since the mid '90s and their singer used to be in '80s bands, like DICTATRISTA and STIGE. As far as I know they have two or three full-lengths (LPs and CDs); some 7"s; and a couple of split 7"s. Not very active on the live side, but still kicking. www.myspace.com/AffluenteHC

Abruzzo District

DISFORIA is the only band I can remember coming from that area. They have been around for some years now and they come from L'Aquila, which is the city that was devastated by the terrible earthquake in April 2009. Since then, I haven't seen them around anymore and that's a real pity — they were a good crust band with a metallic style. These very good musicians delivered a couple of demo CD-Rs and a full professional CD. Hope to see them around very soon. Good luck guys! www.myspace.com/DisforiaCrust

HOBOPHOBIC,
from Taranto have been active for more than ten years. They play a technical and emotional hardcore punk in the vein of PROPAGANDHI, with political lyrics. www.myspace.com/HobophobicHC

Campania District

TETANO, from Benevento, play fast anarco-crustcore with very political lyrics. They have a split 7" with 4° POTERE, but it's been a couple of years since I've heard anything from these guys. No contact information available.

ZONA AUTONOMA TEMPORANEA comes from Salerno and, as far as I know, they have a CD out and run a social centre in their city. Their style is fast and angry hardcore punk with political lyrics and attitude. Good dudes! www.myspace.com/ZonaAutonomaTemporanea

Islands (Sardinia and Sicily)

Just like I said in the beginning of the report, being a punk rocker in Italy is not easy, and, being the same in the south is even worse! Imagine how difficult it would be to be a punk in the islands. Sardinia used to have some very good bands, last decade — VILE FUTURE, BORN SICK and FULL OF HATRED — then they all split up and formed new bands.

IL DISAGIO is crust core with a nice hardcore'n'roll feeling. I don't really know what they have released so far because their story is pretty complicated, but they're a very good band. www.myspace.com/ildisagioHC

4° POTERE is anarcho-punk with a crusty touch in the vein of old Italian glories like 5° BRACCIO, WRETCHED and EU'S ARSE. They have a split 7" out with TETANO and still play some shows around Italy. www.myspace.com/4Potere

A FORA DE ARRASTU is political combat punk. They've toured Italy and have a CD-R and a split CD with FECCIA TRICOLORE. www.myspace.com/AForadeArrastu

MR MURRUNGIO is 100% hardcore punk. The singer plays bass for DIRTY POWER GAME. www.murrungio.altervista.org

There are many other bands doing things in Sardinia, but the difficulty in touring the country and the distance, (you need to take an expensive ferry to get to Italy from there, and the trip lasts more than twelve hours), makes it impossible to get some more information about any of these bands.

In Sicily, the situation is not that different. The mafia is extremely strong and it's difficult to run DIY places. There's not much of a scene here.

HAEMOPHAGUS is probably the most active band on the island. They play energetic grindcore with a good dose of death metal. They're extremely tight and good. Live — they are killers! They've released *Into the Mortuary*, a demo CD-R; *Liturgy of Devourment,* a split CD-R with TOXIC SHOCK SYNDROME from Germany; a three way split CD with BLOODRAISED and SICK BONG HEADQUARTER, both from Italy; *Illegal Grinding*, a six way split CD; *Slaves to the Necromancer* CD; and two split 7"s with AGATHOCLES and SPIRAL; and a full CD. They toured Italy a couple of times and they're going to invade Europe soon. The drummer also plays in GIUDA. www.myspace.com/Haemophagus

FUG is another old school gang that's been around for a while now. I've never seen them live, but people have told me they're great. www.myspace.com/fugHC

SHOCK TROOPERS, from Palermo, play a total Bay Area-style raw crossover thrash and have two CDs, both of which are very well recorded. Live, they are brutal! The drummer was also in LxExAxRxNx and now plays for FECCIA TRICOLORE, as well. www.myspace.com/ShockTroopers

FECCIA TRICOLORE from Palermo, started as an heavy Oi!-core band, but they now play aggressive thrashcore with political lyrics. They remind me of early AGNOSTIC FRONT. Unfortunately they don't play much, because their singer lives in Sardinia and the drummer also plays with SHOCK TROOPERS and other projects.
www.myspace.com/FecciaTricolore

italy scene report

Labels

Zas! Autoproduzioni, from the borders with France, high in the beautiful Alps Mountains, is a label focused on extreme grindcore. It started as a tape label and then started releasing CDs and vinyl. Marco, the head of the label, has released many pieces of noise for bands like AGATHOCLES, REPULSIONE, MEMENTO MORI and tons more.

Copsa, from Ventimiglia, is another small label that has just a few releases out. The last one was a TSUBO/AGATHOCLES split 7".

Angry Records was based in Alessandria and stopped its activities a couple of years ago. Fulvio, from the band JILTED, used to run this label and released items for BOYCOT AXIOM, VISIONS OF WAR, BEYOND DESCRIPTION, INSULT, and, of course, JILTED.

F.O.A.D. is a label run by Marco and GTB that released many cool old records by HC/thrash bands like STINKY RATS, IMPACT, BLUE VOMIT, UNDERAGE, NECRODEATH, etc. Some other cool stuff is gonna be released soon!

S.O.A. has been the most important Italian label through the '90s and at the beginning of the new millennium. The catalogue was unlimited and the releases were always very interesting. Paolo, the head of the label, used to sing for the grinders COMRADES and the Oi!-corers COLONNA INFAME SKINHEAD and released records from AGATHOCLES, DISRUPT, ASSUCK, TASTE OF FEAR, PEGGIO PUNKS, UPSET NOISE, CRIPPLE BASTARDS, COMRADES and tons of other good bands. After a few years of silence, he's back!

Gonna Puke is a HC punk rock label based in Rome and run by Marco from ANTI-YOU. They have a big catalogue, check the latest release — the new GAS ATTACK 7".

Nuclear Chaos is based in Modena and is run by the singer of NO WHITE RAG. He basically started releasing records for his own band and then opened the gates of his hell to many other bands cooperating with other different labels.

Iconoclast is a small record label based in Bologna. The two good dudes who run it have a passion for early hardcore punk, (neo)crust and black/death metal. Some of their releases are BLACK SEPTEMBER 7", CONTRASTO / LE TORMENTO split 7" and POST FATA RESURGO / MITHRA split 7". They have four LPs coming out before the end of the year for cool bands like, BLACK SEPTEMBER, FREEDOOM, BHOPAL and FREDAG DEN 13.

Agipunk is definitely the biggest label in Italy and, apparently, one of the most important DIY labels worldwide. Their catalogue reached number 70 (while I'm writing this), but more projects are in the works. Expect AG80 to be released before the end of the year. Agipunk is not only a label, but also a distro, (named Tetanus, which was a grindcore punk label in the nineties that melded into Agipunk at the beginning of the last decade) and a DIY booking agency plus van rental (Disastro Sonoro Booking). The three people running this project are Mila, Borys and Koppa. All are involved in the band GIUDA and in many other bands (KONTATTO, DISARM, CAMPUS STERMINII, BARBARIANS, DEATH FROM ABOVE). Some of the bands who have released records on Agipunk are WOLFBRIGADE, STORMCOW, SANCTUM, HELLBASTARD, FORCA MACABRA, VITAMIN X, REALITY CRISIS and MASSGRAVE. Agipunk has always helped the development of the Italian hardcore scene, so releasing

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records for CONTRASTO, DIRTY POWER GAME, ED, BANxTHIS, and, of course, GIUDA, CAMPUS STERMINII, and KONTATTO, amongst others. Many new releases are in progress, so look for new items from UNCURBED, PHOBIA, EXTINCTION OF MANKIND, SLAUGHTER. www.agipunk.com

Fanzines

During the '80s and the '90s, there were a good number of zines around the Boot, but now, the situation is pretty sad. Most of the nice paper zines have been replaced by dumb webzines, with a lot of complaints from those who can't take a shit anymore as they have no pc in their toilets. I'm not going to talk about webzines, because I don't like them and I never read them. About the surviving paper zines I can list: *Dancing with Myself*, from Milano; *Flagello*, written by Borys (Agipunk and GIUDA), David (HAEMOPHAGUS and GIUDA), Marco (ZAS! AUTOPRODUZIONI), Cassi and Pera (LaScintilla squat); *Play Fast or Don't,* ultra/thrashcore zine written by Capo' from NEID. All these are written in Italian, so you may not be able to understand a flying fuck, but you can trust me — they're all fucking great!

Venues

La Scintilla, Modena is a fucking nice venue, has been open since the second half of the '80s. Everybody has played there: VARUKERS, HELLBASTARD, DETESTATION, TRAGEDY, DOOM, ENT, HELLSHOCK, AGATHOCLES, INFEZIONE and many more. Use to be active on the political front as well, but now it's a bit less involved than before. Agipunk's Rovina Hardcore Festival, the main DIY event in Italy, takes place there.

LA SCINTILLA SQUAT MODENA

Atlantide, Bologna used to be a 100% illegal squat, but now they had to find a small compromise to keep it alive, and it still rocks! Three collectives run this place, Antagonismo Gay (the gay one), Clitoristix (the feminist one) and Nulla Osta (the punk one). This place is very small — with 130 people it's packed. Shows are 100% fun! WARCOLLAPSE, AGAINST ME!, SANCTUM, CANNABIS CORPSE, TOTAL CHAOS, ZENI GEVA, DEVIATED INSTINCT, ASSHOLE PARADE and a shitload of other bands have played there.

Pieffe Factory in Lucinico (GO) is a very nice club that organizes cool events almost every night. Metal, punk, hardcore, rock, cover bands, ska bands play here, but there's no chance to meet Nazis or dodgie people. It's ran by the guys from the punk band OSDS. Those who have played here include DISCHARGE, EU'S ARSE, NEW YORK DOLLS, ADOLESCENTS, INSTINCT OF SURVIVAL, and ANTI NOWHERE LEAGUE.

El Paso, in Torino used to be one of the main places for hardcore punk events. Now it's almost dead. R.I.P.

United Club in Torino is run by people who left El Paso. It's working much better now. Not many people go to shows in Torino, apparently, but the people are very nice.

Villa Vegan in Milano is a 100% anarcho squat! Many political activities are happening there and some shows. Not the best place to play in Italy, but definitely a good one.

SGA in Arese (MI) is a youth center. They set up mainly hardcore shows.

Dauntaun in Milano is a nice fucking place right underneath the mighty Leoncavallo. The people who run it are extremely nice and cool. The kids are very open-minded and many good bands have played there including FUCKED UP, VITAMIN X, INEPSY TRAGEDY, CYNESS, and some less punky shit.

XM24 in Bologna is a huge squat where gay, communist, feminist and anarchist collectives organize demos, markets and shows. Not exactly the main punk venue, but, for sure, one of the most active places in Bologna where punks hang out and, sometimes, they also play.

Next, Emerson in Firenze. This is more like a typical '90s social center with a lot of ska/reggae nights, but there are also cool punk shows. BORN DEAD, WOLFBRIGADE, and WARCOLLAPSE are some of those punk bands that have had the pleasure to play there.

Capolinea in Faenza (RA) mostly has local bands playing there. This is a nice social center that is hardly ever rocked by bands from abroad because Faenza is not exactly the neuralgic point of the Italian punk scene, but still it's a good place to hang out. Anarchist and communist collective organize the political events.

Bencivenga in Rome used to be very active years ago, then it went a little bit on a hiatus, than active again, then hiatus and so on. Still political it is definitely not on the list of the most anarcho squats in town, but I know the people there, and they're fucking cool guys! WOLFBRIGADE, TRAGEDY, WARCOLLAPSE, MOB 47, MODERAT, LIKVIDATION, AGATHOCLES, and HELLSHOCK have played here.

The first time I went to Pirateria in Rome people told me it was under eviction. This was probably seven years ago, and Pirateria is still there, but always under a constant eviction threat. This venue is small and nice. People are fun and kind. I've always had a good time there and the gigs have been awesome. AVSKUM and AGHAST played there.

Torre Maura in Rome is another squat that has been around forever. Strongly political, the main purpose of this squat is to fight against our enemies. A little bit of fun is always well accepted, too. I can't list all of the bands that have played there because I've been there only twice, but I remember INEPSY and CAPITALIST CASUALTIES.

Ex Carcere in Jesi (AN) is a cool place run by the guys from HUMUS and other anarchists. Not many foreign bands have played there, but it's a good place to hang out, read some books, have some wine and listen to some good bands.

Le Macerie in Molfetta (BA) is a squat that is basically a circus tent with a bar and a stage inside. I've been there only once because it's very far from where I live, but it's nice! The guys collect many dogs that they find abandoned on the streets and feed them. Cool!

I've been to May Day in La Spezia only twice and I can't say I had the time of my life, but it's still a remarkable place because it's pretty active. The Feel Their Pain Festival is organized there. This is one of those social centers that I consider "frozen in the '90s," which is not a bad thing at all. It's definitely not my cup of tea. The scene in that city is pretty limited, both in number and knowledge; it's sometimes not worth going there.

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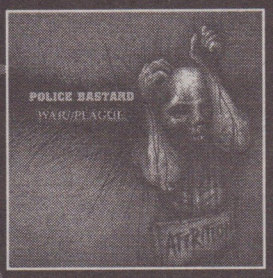
Profane Existence is proud to team up with crust punk/metal legends Amebix for the release of three classic Amebix tracks as redone by the current line-up: Rob (aka "The Baron), Stig, and Roy. Total running time is approx. 21 minutes and will be available on heavyweight 12" vinyl (with an embroidered Amebix patch), compact disc and via digital download (with a bonus preview track of their upcoming live album/DVD release). You can even preview before you buy at last.fm and don't forget to sign up for the mailing list @ AMEBIX.NET!



POLICE BASTARD & WAR// PLAGUE split LP/CD

A split album by two bands comprised of weathered veterans from both sides of the Atlantic: POLICE BASTARD hailing from Birmingham, UK (formed by ex-DOOM members) and WAR//PLAGUE from the DIY punk underbelly of Minneapolis (ex-PROVOKED, CALLOUSED, etc.).

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Jul 12 Reno, NV @ Ground Zero
Jul 13 Isla Vista, CA
Jul 14 Las Vegas, NV
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Jul 17 Los Angeles @ The Blvd
Jul 22 Appleton, Wi 6:30P
Jul 23 Mpls, MN @ Rat House

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VENEREANS

FUTURE PRIMITIVE

When we got the Venereans Future Primitive LP here at the MRR compound, it barely left the turntable. For months! A truly perfect blend of snottiness and fun with a new take on beach punk that somehow includes covering United Mutation? An LP named after a Bones Brigade video that isn't generi-thrash? Count me in!
Intro by Layla / Interview by Elvis von Doom
Michi-Bass / Isidro-Drums voice / Jonathan (Joni)-Guitar voice

MRR: Tell me where you live, about its grandiose architecture, venues to play, the punk scene and how it all affects Venereans.
Michi: I'm from Madrid, came here four years ago, so my view is biased. Don't care about the punk scene or any other scene, but my mates kick ass; we're all together in something larger than punk: Life. Lots of talent, bonhomie, team-work, and very little ego. Valencia—it's a shithole that turned into a nice place to do things due to the creative spirits of some exciting individuals. It inspires both the band and my life positively, and I feel in debt for that. When I leave they'll inherit a place in my heart. The best place to play and meet friends is La Residencia, a DIY, non-commercial venue.
Isidro: I do not give a damn about the architecture of Valencia. As a skateboarder I explored it and destroyed it as much as I could, but I'm feeling old and tired these days and can't do it anymore. That being said, I love Valencia. It's my land. I hope I am around when touched by Death.

MRR: The lyrics of your tunes aren't introspective. They show rage in a singular manner. Where do they come from, what's the process, and where do the lyrics "Burka For Everybody" come from, which are repeated in a couple of tunes?
Michi: It's almost impossible not to make mean-spirited music today. The problem is what are you reaching for out of those negative spirits, and we try to keep ourselves excited, and excite other people with the energy obtained from those bad feelings. Our smile is as durable as stainless steel. It's a common strategy in rock'n'roll, and in life, to combine darkness and fun. You can see that in many interesting projects from the Stooges to Born Against. Humor is a resourceful self-defense weapon.
Isidro: *Burka For Everybody* is a fanzine Jonathan does on the internet. He wanted to use those words for a song since they sound really cool and I came out with this anthem against Zara, H&M, etc. victims. Think American Apparel, Urban Outfitters victims for the US. Besides that song, we sing about chicks (Venereans that is), hopeless boredom (maybe too much), and the fears, horrors and pains, but yet the joy, of living in the 21st century in general. But, that's just my guess.

MRR: To me you sound like classic US hardcore/punk with a little bit of melody from the Dutch scene of the '80s, but with the strange vibrations of the freakiest sixties garage. Please, tell me I`m wrong.
Michi: I don't know much about those things, but if we're having some beers at your place, and you crank those tunes on the stereo, chances are I'm gonna boogie to them.
Isidro: I don't have a name for it. I just play music with these two guys cuz it works.

MRR: About the album, how did you record it, and how did it come out at the same time on both sides of the Atlantic?
Michi: We did it like everything we do: *A lo loco.*
Isidro: I'd just like to say that the record sounds faster than it actually is. Some dirty bitch took the master mix and managed to speed it up on its way to the pressing factory. I was really upset when I played the record on my turntable. We'll find out who's the rat and he'll pay for that! The record is ok but it is too fast. Our mix is killer!

MRR: How did the idea of putting out the record on Tic Tac Totally in the US, and Discos Humeantes in Europe come about? What´s interesting in Spain nowadays?
Isidro: Jonathan did our MySpace page. We had a few songs there and Mat from TTT wrote us. He wanted to put out a record, which we took almost two years to record. In the meantime Pablo showed

up, and they both agreed to release it together, TTT in America and Pablo in Europe. Moho from Madrid surprised me years ago. I saw them again a month ago, and they simply blew my mind. Las Rodilleras from Valencia has been a good discovery this year, and don't miss the soon-to-come Concentration Summer Camps' new record.
Michi: There are some very exciting bands in Spain right now. Moho are one of the best heavy bands I've seen, so are Giganto. Charades, Me and the Bees and Wild Honey play the kind of pop where a lot of talent is needed for it to be crafted. In the punkish realm we have Los Plátanos, Nueva Vulcano, Las Rodilleras, Las Señoras, and you must definitely check out Betunizer, the best rhythm and noise band I've heard since the times of Touch & Go. Pablo from Discos Humeantes is a very sound guy. Cheers, pal.

MRR: That interest in darkness that you mentioned before is a basic element in the most dangerous rock´n'roll. Do you think this is still alive? Are there any actual bands into that same vibe?
Michi: I think that we humans are very much alike in certain ways. We tend to gravitate toward common feelings and have common ways of expressing them, no matter what aesthetic. I think there's always a bunch of freaks in a corner or a basement of the western world, and probably eastern, feeling blue and down, and coming up with something creative to get out of that feeling with style, with savoir faire. That I might get to know they exist is trivial. They're doing their thing— it's important to them.

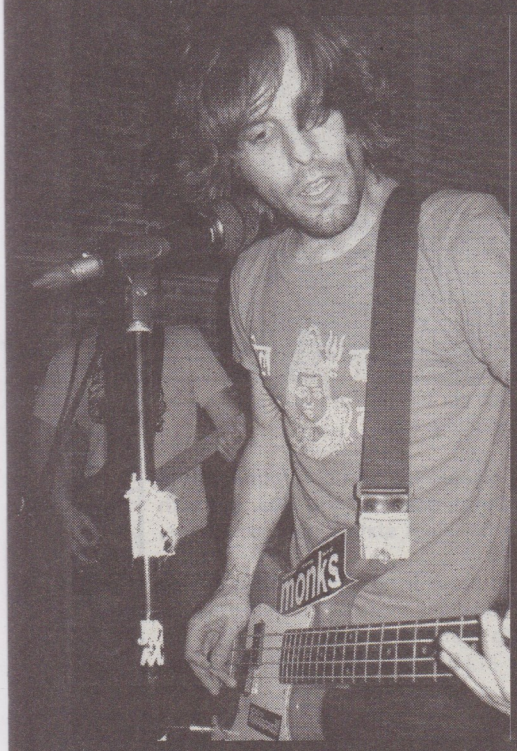
short year of 1979, was the coolest psychedelic guru ever in Spain. People didn´t understand, as usually happens to interesting chaps, and he came back, to walk an already beaten track.

MRR: Joni, tell me about your other projects Burka For Everybody Records and *Chilena Commando* fanzine.
Joni: Burka For Everybody is a record label I do with two friends. We have three records out: Gepopel, Toxin III and Michael Yonkers/Gr, and there are many upcoming by Napalm Beach, Maximo Volumen, De Hoje Haele, Skjit Lars, Snufflix. A very great waste of time. And the *Chilena Commando* fanzine is the same. Some friends doing something together; in this case to write about music, and many other things in general. You can find info here: www.burkaforeverybody.com.

MRR: Joni, who did you steal your playing technique from? Did you purchase it at a crossroads for a few Euros?
Joni: I had a good teacher, Dave Mustaine!

MRR: Those bass lines of yours, young Michi, sometimes get to very strange configurations. Drugs and limitations are the reason?
Michi: To blame things on drugs, instead of putting the blame on people, is a very conservative way of thinking that I don't endorse. I don't know how to play bass, but I can definitely kick your ass while on stage, which I certainly will do, given the occasion. Even blindfolded and with hands tied. And you know, dear friend Iván, that I don't bet unless I know I'll win. Love, pal.

photos by Carla and Carlos Bentronix



MRR: The cover art shows the infamous Gipsy Cyclops. Who did it, did you argue a lot about the cover art, and do you mention in your songs the Gipsy Cyclops?
Isidro: The Gipsy Cyclops is the only survivor after the disaster in our song "Terminal Beach". That's because he made friends with the mysterious authors. You can hear his voice from the cave telling the true story between Jonathan's lines, the official report of the facts. So, Camaron (RIP) is the King of Gypsies. Jonathan used him on this collage for the poster of our first gig. I thought we would make a 45 with it since we all liked it, but it ended up being the cover of this record.
Michi: Generally speaking, we argue. The guy on the cover, during the

MRR: How is touring Spain? Do people dance, do drugs abound, any police harassment, or are you part of a healthy DIY scene, more interested in art?
Michi: Spain is really funny, generally speaking. So we're having a blast with you people, and we would love to have a blast with people from many other countries and places. We love meeting people with energy. I'm very interested in art, be it the art of your smile, the way you walk, or the way you roll. We're eager to be in front of you guys, at arm's distance.
Isidro: I have fun everywhere I go.

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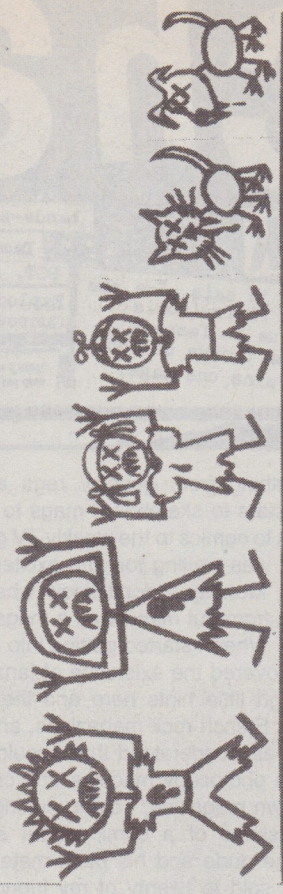

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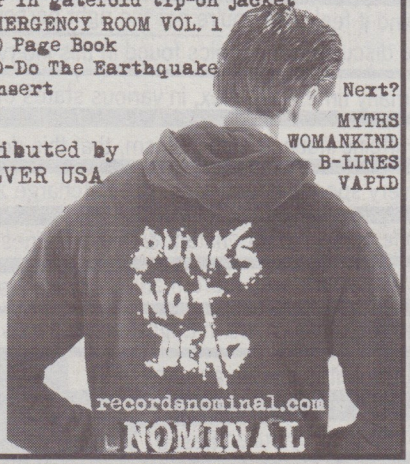

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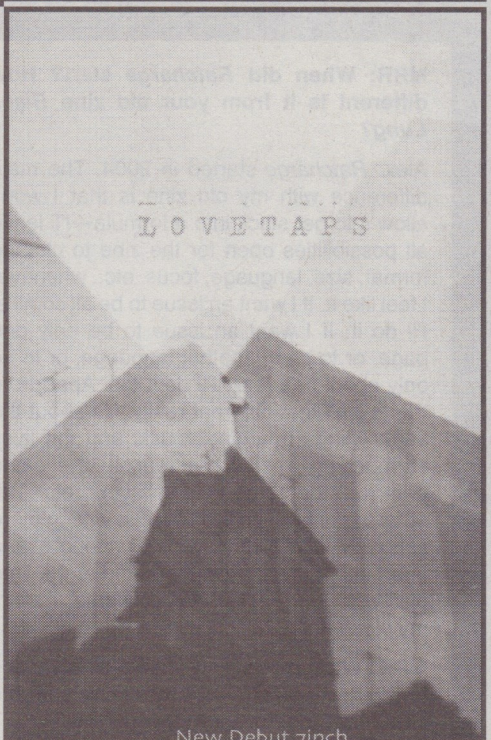

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Interviewing your friends is never easy. It's awkward and it feels like you're not the right person to do it. I've discussed the topics found in this interview so many times with Alex, in various states of alcohol or caffeine-induced enthousiasm, that this doesn't feel very spontaneous to me. But Ratcharge zine has been one of the most constant & relevant zines of the past five + years, with more than twenty issues out so far (three of which are in English), that it was long overdue for a little chat in good ol' MRR.

Interview by Julien Besse.

MRR: When did *Ratcharge* start? How different is it from your old zine *Black Lung*?

Alex: *Ratcharge* started in 2004. The main difference with my old zine is that I won't allow it to get stuck into a formula—I'll leave all possibilities open for the zine to change format, size, language, focus, etc., whenever I feel like it. If I want an issue to be all comics, I'll do it. If I want an issue to be only one page, or to be in another language, or to be only about free-jazz, I'll do it too. Apart from that it isn't that different really, it's about the same things (marginal music and the lives surrounding it), it's got roughly the same print run, the same kind of layout, etc. The other big difference is that I take writing more seriously and put way more thought and effort into it these days than I did at the time of *Black Lung*—for better or worse, it's not my place to say.

MRR: What made you start making zines in the first place? Were there any specific zines that inspired you then? Now?

Alex: When I was twelve I did a zine about video games. Of course I never photocopied it, there was only one copy but the need to do some kind of magazine of my own was already there. Magazines have always been my favorite medium and I read them voraciously during my teenage years, everything from gossipy rags about pop stars to skateboard mags to rock mags to comics to the weekly TV guide that I was waiting for with excitement every Monday. I don't know where it came from but man I was a magazine freak. When I started getting into punk I discovered the existence of fanzines through little hints here and there in some French rock magazines, and as soon as I understood that I could just use a photocopy machine and create my own magazine, I did it, putting out two issues of a comic about some grunge dude and his punk mate that I just sold to twenty of my friends at school. Around the same period I mailordered my first zine, *Karnage*, a French cut and paste mess that dealt with bands I had never heard of in a way that I didn't fully understand with lots of in-jokes that I didn't get but fuck me if it wasn't the coolest thing I had ever seen. Shortly after that I started my first "serious" zine, *Black Lung*, and very shortly after that I discovered *MRR* which, as cheesy as it may sound, turned my world upside down—it was international, underground, radical, political, funny, and it made me feel like I had signed in to be part of a worldwide underground conspiration of freaks and weirdos without knowing it. This was ten years ago and I didn't know about the internet, didn't have a computer, etc, which goes to show how fast times have changed. Anyway, fast-forwarding a few years, I'd say the main shit that inspired *Ratcharge* has been the whole US zine revival of the early to mid '00s: *Game of the Arseholes*, *Destroy What Bores You*, *How Much Art Can You Take?*, *Voices Wake Us*, *Square One Again*, that kind of shit. Nowadays I still think that stuff was amazing (especially *GOTA* and *DWBY*), but current publications like *Distort*, *The Negative Guest List* (Australia), *Heartbeat* (France), *Z-Gun*, and *Counterfeit Garbage* (USA) are just as good if not better. They keep me excited, anyway.

MRR: I read an interview with one of my favorite zine writers where he said that one of his main motivations to make zines and art was that he needed to "feel understood." It had never occured to me before that this could be a common thread amongst zine writers...

Alex: It had never occured to me either. I guess reading someone's zine can help understand part of who that person is, but I don't think it's why I'm doing this personally. In my experience the zine has provoked as much "understanding" as "misunderstanding," in that I've sometimes been approached by people who think they know me because they've read *Ratcharge* but end up surprised or even disapointed. Like people meeting me for the first time and being surprised that I listen to this or that band because they had this idea of what type of music I was and wasn't into, or people assuming that I think a certain way about a given subject just because of something I wrote at some point. Whether it is with writing or music or any other type of art I think it's important to understand that it's only a certain part of a person that is being exposed, not the person as a whole. Feel understood by whom anyway? Some people in my family have read my zines and they just ended up thinking I was even more of a freak than they already thought I was so.

MRR: *Ratcharge* is equally about music and your own personal life experiences. A common topic is your teenage years in the Paris bland, depressing outskirts. Want to talk about the place to *MRR* readers?

Alex: Sure. Growing up in the suburbs of Paris was like being stuck in a small town with a population of 7 million. It was like the worst aspects of living in the city mixed with the worst aspects

of living in the country and none of the positive sides of either. There are a lot of different types of suburbs in the Paris area, some very poor, some very rich, some very urban, some very country-like, but I think most of them share a sense of isolation, intense boredom, and an ongoing identity crisis. In Paris the French government makes it really expensive for people from the suburbs to go to the city and it's hard and complicated to go to other suburbs, so unless you're really rich, have a car and can afford it, you are stuck in the same small place with nothing to do. Of course most teenagers aren't rich and cannot drive so they're all stuck and have to do deal with it. Savigny/ Orge is the suburban town where I spent most of my teenage years. It was a fucking shithole, a very right-wing place (its main politicians had strong connections with the Front National, the French fascist party) with absolutely nothing to do for young people apart from organized sports and playing classical music, so if you weren't into those things you were fucked. During the French suburban riots of 2005/2006 it was the first city in France to apply the "curfew," meaning that it was forbidden for young people to go in the streets after 9 or 10pm, and you'd have police cars slowly driving in the streets with a megaphone saying "stay inside, the curfew is on" or something equally dumb. The division between the rich and the poor areas of the city was a fucking joke as well, a blatant attempt at keeping both separated. There was a youth center that struggled to survive, not getting any subventions, while at the same time you had five or six really fancy retirement homes and spectacles for old people organized by the city every week or so. There was nothing to do and nowhere to go for teenagers who craved something more than TV and giant malls, so we'd just stay outside and do all the dumb shit we could to fight boredom—drinking, skateboarding, stealing, doing drugs and so on.

I don't want to get into too much detail here because I feel like what I'm saying is probably true of a lot of other suburbs in other countries in all the western world and somewhat cliché. The reason why I've written so much about the place is that a lot of crazy/ weird stuff happened when I was living there. As there was no "underground" or "subculture" at all we created our own thing without *any* example to follow, and we also were, I think, an interesting mix of young weirdos—in small towns like that all the freaks and outsiders and lost kids tend to get together so you get the metalheads, the hippies, the "punks," the skateboarders, the hip hop kids, the nerds, the potheads, and all those other awkward types being "friends"

or at least relating to each other on a regular basis. Growing up there shaped who I am and my relationship to punk big time—there was no "punk scene" of any kind, not a single punk band, nothing, so I just spent years reading magazines, books, and later fanzines, about what punk was and I made up my own definition of it, so by the time I started to go to proper squat gigs in the city and to meet other punks I already had a strong idea of what I was getting into. I think I'm still carrying that idea with me today, ten years after leaving the place.

MRR: What kind of feedback do you usually get about the more personal content of the zine? Do you think that "personal writing" became a loaded concept because of past trends of emo/ per-zines?

Alex: First I think it is appropriate to mention that the people who only read the (few) English-written issues of *Ratcharge* don't really know what we're talking about here, as those issues didn't feature the kind of writing you're referring to, because it is too hard for me to write this type of shit in English in a satisfying way. So to put things into context for the English readers what we're talking about here are stories about drugs, big cities, depression, hating disco music, dirty squats, dirty people, working on construction sites with annoying skinheads, smoking endless amounts of cigarettes, visiting concentration camps, the end of the world, that kind of shit. Anyway, I don't like the term "personal writing." I prefer to call these things short stories, "slices of life," creative non-fiction, etc. I wouldn't want to be associated with the whole "per-zine" crowd (all those zines published by Microcosm, etc), which, yes, in a way I think ruined the concept for everyone else by being plain boring, embarassingly cute, and talking about crap that got old really fast (bicycles, vegan food, falling in love, hugs, etc). I think it's a bummer that this neo-hippie, post-post-punk, suspiciously positive crowd of people ended up being the only ones putting out zines featuring creative non-fiction and telling stories about their lives, because I like the original concept of "personal zines" in itself, and if 99% of these zines are boring and embarrassing it isn't because the medium itself isn't a good one but because 99% of the people writing them are fucking boring in the first place! Zines like *Cometbus*, *SCAM*, or *Ration* are often filed under "personal zines" but are written by inspiring people who put a lot of thought and effort into what they're doing, which in the end is what makes the difference between a shitty zine and a good one, regardless of the subject. It should also be said that there have been (and still are) a lot of shitty music zines as well, so I guess it's all up to who is writing the zine and what kind of effort is put into it. Just imagine a "personal zine" written by someone like Bukowski, Hunter S. Thompson, Lester Bangs, Virginie Despentes, GG Allin or, hell, Scott Soriano: wouldn't you want to read that?! I'd subscribe in a minute. My ideal zine would be a cross between a music fanzine and an underground literary magazine publishing dark fucked up short stories.

And to answer the first part of your question, the non-musical content of the zine is and has always been the part I get the most feedback about, to the point where I feel like a good half of the people reading *Ratcharge* in France are reading it more for this than for the music shit. Fine

by me, it's the way I want it—I don't really like the idea of putting out a zine of which every issue would appeal only to extreme music nerds and record collectors

MRR: Has your writing ever been misunderstood to the point of provoking angry reactions from people?

Alex: When I was doing *Black Lung* my policy was to review everything that was sent my way so I ended up writing some rather negative shit and got pissed off labels and bands sending angry emails to me, which was pretty entertaining. With *Ratcharge* I only review what I feel like so I receive a lot less promo records (barely any actually) and it's pretty rare that I completely trash a record. I frequently get letters and emails about the zine and they are 90% of the time really encouraging and positive, but yeah I'm aware some people hate me and hate *Ratcharge*. The complaint I've received the most is that I had too much of a "punker than thou" attitude, which was definitely true a few years back and might still be true today to a degree (I doubt it but who knows). A few issues back I wrote a piece against disco/dance music that resulted in someone sending me a 12 page pocket-sized zine entirely dedicated to detailing why I was some kind of close-minded self-involved right-wing asshole or something; I was flattered someone would dedicate this much time to answering something I wrote, and it was a good read so I published it as a letter, together with my answer to it. It should be said that I had trashed that person's band in a previous issue and that I doubt their reaction would have been this pissed off if I hadn't. Also it seems a few French "zinesters" took it personally when I said that writing about their bicycles was boring as hell but fuck, I still agree with myself here. The latest angry reaction I got was from this guy who booked a gig for this band I played in and I wrote a review of it saying it felt really professional, with a big stage and fancy P.A and shitty bands and all that crap that makes me feel depressed and uncomfortable, and the guy thought I was being an ungrateful asshole, which is probably true to a degree but fuck, I also think that people in punk aren't used to criticism and don't know how to take it anymore. I hate all that "let's all be friends" scenester bullshit that's a big part of socializing within the "DIY community" or whatever horrible cute term people want to call it. I feel like some people collect friends the way others collect records, just trying to be friends with the right people who are in the cool bands and all that shit and I'm fairly disgusted by that mentality at this point. To be honest I like getting reactions to what I write in the zine, whether it is positive or negative—I will never write something just to get a reaction or piss people off but if it does it's usually an opportunity for discussion, which is a good thing in my book.

MRR: *Ratcharge*'s music coverage used to be mostly focused on raw punk, d-beat, noise-core and the like, until a few issues ago when it's slowly started to change. Did the change upset your readers? What kind of stuff can we expect to read about in future issues?

Alex: For the record I'd like to start by saying I don't fully agree with your definition of the zine's focus. It isn't the first time someone's described *Ratcharge* as focusing on "raw punk, d-beat, and noise-core" and while I definitely love, have covered, and will continue to cover some of this stuff I also think this definition is misleading as it gives the feeling of an exclusively "crusty" type of zine, which *Ratcharge* isn't and never was. Sure the name is a blatant Discharge tribute and I've used more black than white in the layouts of a lot of issues but the focus has always been on hardcore punk in general, and people and bands like the Big Boys, Gorilla Angreb, Ultimo Resorte, George Tabb, Hjertestop, Margaret Thrasher, Out with a Bang, Flipper, and Autistic Youth, just to name a few, have all been covered/interviewed, neither of those being "crusty" by any means. Also in 20 issues I've only interviewed two straight-up d-beat bands. Just saying.

Anyway, the point of doing this zine has always been to cover the music I'm into and yes after years of being a self-proclaimed close-minded hardcore punk my tastes have started to broaden quite a lot. This is obviously the result of getting older, but also of befriending a number of enthusiastic music freaks who introduced me to tons of mind-blowing shit outside of the raw/fast spectrum and most importantly of moving away from a huge city (Paris) to a smaller one (Lyon) where the divisions between the different "scenes" are way more blurry and everyone seems to be more open-minded. So nowadays I'm into some garage new and old, post-punk, art-punk, no-wave, jazz and free-jazz, pure noise, some classic rock and psychedelic shit, the list goes on and I'll cover some of

that stuff if I feel like it, no matter what the readers think of it. As I've said before there are no rules to what *Ratcharge* is and isn't and I hope the readers understand that. So far I have received zero negative feedback about the "change" so I can't tell you if the readers are upset or not; I wouldn't be surprised if someone somewhere is calling me a sell-out but who cares? It's not like I've radically changed overnight or suddenly gave up on hardcore and started proclaiming that early Discharge sucks, you know? Future issues will definitely continue in that direction, which is still keeping a focus on obscure hardcore punk while being open to the other genres I've mentioned.

MRR: *Ratcharge*, along with some other current music zines, is now covering more obscure music than before, sometimes facing criticisms of "elitism" because of it. What do you think about such criticisms?

Alex: It doesn't disturb me if someone thinks my (or some other) zine is elitist. I'm obviously not trying to appeal to the largest possible audience—if I did I would put bands like the Sex Pistols, the Misfits, the Clash, Black Flag, or the Dead Kennedys on the cover of each issue, I would try to advertise the zine, accept advertisements to afford a larger print run, suck the right bands' and labels' cocks, etc. These are all things I don't do, obviously, and for a reason. Most of the shit I cover in *Ratcharge* appeals to maybe 20% or less of the punk scene, which means that it's aimed at maybe, what, 0.000001% of the world population? So in that way, of course it is elitist! Also I feel that people who are concerned with addressing issues of elitism are the ones who think that punk should be for everybody, that we should be on a mission to "convert normal people to punk" or something equally retarded. I'm not one of these people, I don't wanna convert anyone to anything and I don't think that the world would be a better place if more people were exposed to punk, I just think the punk scene would be an even shittier place, that's all. What we do is (and shall remain) secret, if you know what I mean. On the other hand, I think it's really easy for someone who could potentially be interested in a zine like *Ratcharge* to get a copy and see for themselves. The zine is out there, I send it to as many distros as I can, it's got an internet presence and all you have to do to get it is send me 2€ and a couple stamps. I do my best to keep the price as low as possible, I scam copies when I can, I scam the post office all the time, I answer every single email I receive, etc, so all these things mean that anyone can get the zine. Hell, when people tell me they're broke and can't afford it but would like to get a copy I just give them away for free. I've always done that, no matter who it is, no matter if I think that person will like the zine or not. I also think that the definition of what is and isn't "obscure" has changed big time with the popularization of file-sharing, music blogs, etc. A few years ago when I wrote a review of the first demotape by some hardcore band from a small town in Wisconsin, it was obscure as fuck as even the means of hearing that band's music (i.e. sending some well-hidden cash in the mail together with a hand-written note to a person you had never met) were alien to most people, including young punks. Nowadays if I write about ANY band you can just Google their name and most likely download said demo or at least hear a few tracks in a matter of seconds. If you really want the demo you can order it via paypal, the least "obscure" paying system there is. With this in mind it seems logical that current music zines would cover more and more obscure material, because less and less music is truly obscure. I hope this made sense. Bottom line, anyway, is that I write about the bands that I'm into, period, and if you wanna read about the "less obscure" punk bands there is a whole lot of material widely available in books, magazines, and blogs for you to dig into. Maybe once you've read those you'll wanna go back and read small zines to learn some more.

MRR: You currently live in Australia, after having spent a fews years in Lyon, France. As far as the punk and music scene are concerned, I'm curious about whether you feel like there's a big difference between the two places. After all, the western/rich world is becoming very homogenized and our little ghetto is no exception.

Alex: That's a hard one, considering I've only spent about six months altogether in Australia so far and spent most of it in Melbourne, so that's the only place I can talk about, and it takes longer than that to understand how a place works and what are its high/low points, etc. And I'm way less involved with the punk/underground music scene here than I was in France, I don't go to that many gigs, I don't know many people, don't socialize much, and so on, so that's to be taken into consideration. Keeping this in mind, the feeling I get from

punk in Melbourne is quite different from what I experienced in Lyon, Paris, or the rest of France. First there is an incredible amount of bands here, and a lot of them are good to great, too. It seems that every weekend there are like four or five different gigs of interest if you're into different styles of punk. One of the reasons for this seems to be that Australia's got a massive rock'n'roll culture that France never had—guitar shops are everywhere, lots of record stores too, every asshole in the street dresses vaguely "punk" or alternative or rock'n'roll or whatever you wanna call it, the Melbourne museum ran an exhibition about AC/DC, you can buy punk shirts and tight black pants everywhere, etc. I've seen more random people wearing Black Flag t-shirts in the streets here than I know people who listen to this band in all of France! So what all this tends to do is to give punk a really "mainstream" feel, something that's been digested by popular culture, something acceptable and accepted. You can go to a hipster bar and get some free professional music magazine that has articles about local synth-punk, garage, or punk bands, and the articles aren't even that bad! This is crazy to me, and definitely something that wouldn't happen regularly in France. All in all I find myself a bit bummed out about punk in Melbourne because it doesn't have that crucial underground conspiracy, "what we do is secret" type of feeling that it's still got in France and that attracted me to it in the first place.

One thing that's very important to me in the French underground punk/music scene is that it is strongly linked to the squat movement—that feeling of a place being illegal, chaotic, self-run, and having a short life-span gives gigs in squats a sense of intensity and urgency that I never really found in other types of venues, and that I definitely don't find in Melbourne where most gigs are in bars. Squat culture as we experience it in France doesn't seem to exist here (there are some squats but no culturally active ones it seems). French squats are also populated by what I find to be a diverse audience of freaks and weirdos, from drunk anarchist queer kids to radical feminists to homeless chaos punks to university students and so on, and that mix creates an atmosphere that I'm really addicted to, an atmosphere that's a vehicle for unexpected and often interesting encounters, discussions, and situations. I've got so many stories of crazy fucking shit happening at gigs in squats, and I love the feeling that anything can happen, and I love the fact that there are no fucking rules in there. It's hard to describe exactly what I like about punk gigs in France, especially to a foreign audience, and I don't want to sound like I'm talking shit on the Australian scene because, again, I'm not that familiar with it. People at French shows seem to be a bit older as well, which gives gigs a more "serious" feel sometimes, which has its pros and cons. On the other hand bands seem to approach their music more seriously in Australia (and I don't mean "professionally," I mean "seriously" as in "it's important"), and the Australians definitely understand hardcore music in a way that the French don't! They generally do better zines, too. Oh, one last thing is that Melbourne is a way bigger city than Lyon and has a huge music scene so everything seems more divided into little cliques and sub-genres, and I find that to be pretty boring at this point.

MRR: You also draw comics and flyers. Is drawing/visual art something you'd like to pursue more seriously?

Alex: I enjoy drawing but I'm really lazy about it. It's always been this thing that I do when I'm incredibly bored (I used to draw *a lot* at school for instance) so I don't know if "serious" is what I'd call it. I've been really flattered that some bands and zines I like have asked me to do some shit for them, and I will continue to do it as long as people ask for stuff. That's all I can tell you for the moment. But who knows, if I ever get tired of writing zines and playing music maybe I'll get into the business of doing full-color paintings of dumb looking characters wanking and eating their boogers and sell them to rich hipsters in art galleries, there seems to be quite a market for expensive dumb shit in that world!

MRR: What do you think is the relevance of zines in this day and age?

Alex: I'd say fanzines today are as relevant as tapes or vinyl in the digital age, meaning they probably aren't to most people, but we're not doing this to please most people, right? As long as print media isn't completely dead (and frankly, I think it's still very far from its grave) zines will be relevant and so will books and magazines. Fanzines feel warm and real in a world that feels cold and mechanical. I feel like the internet is just a tool, whereas a printed fanzine is an end in itself, if you know what I mean. No zine will ever get "deleted"—instead it will just lay on the floor next to a dirty sock and an empty beer bottle, where it belongs, here, in the real world.

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CULO are a ripping new HC punk band from the suburbs of Chicago. These are the new kids whether you love them or hate them; they don't care. When I first saw this band live it was like a fucking bomb went off and every time since it has been the same. If you like hardcore angry and pissed with fuck you attitude then read on and try to keep up. Their new EP is out on Punks Before Profits records so check it out.

Interview by Ryan and Claire.
Photos by Craig Kamarath

cülo

MRR: Okay let's start by everyone saying, "I'm… and I do…"
Nathan: I'm Nathan and I play guitar.
John: I'm John and I sing.
Sean: My name's Sean and I play drums.
Corey: Corey and I also play guitar.

MRR: Okay so I'll start off with the question I've always wanted to ask you guys. Why do you have the name CÜLO? Why do you have a Spanish name?
Nathan: Honestly… I actually got the name from hanging out with my girlfriend who is Mexican. We had so many names and I wanted a name that was offensive to a degree. I was giving words to her and she was telling me the words in Spanish and I said "butthole" and she said "cülo" and for some reason I just thought that was hilarious… plus then it also worked then because I thought it was somewhat ironic that we live in such a heavily Hispanic punk and hardcore scene that I thought it was funny to be in another band with a Spanish name even though we were just four fucking white kids that live in the suburbs that are middle class and completely aren't working within a tight-knit Latino community, and they wouldn't even want us to because we are white, but there are multiple reasons, though mainly out of pure comedy is why our name is Cülo.

MRR: So you guys are from Elgin, kind of suburban Chicago, do you feel like you're a part of the Chicago scene or any side of it? Or just like kind of your own thing?
All: No.
Nathan: No and if we really wanted to integrate ourselves we easily could, it's not hard to sweet-talk someone and you know suck up and be a cunt, but like Jerry from Poison Idea put it the best when he said he was only in a band for himself and his friends and doesn't give a shit about anyone else and that's completely I would say…
Sean: It's pretty obvious, even to you, whenever we're at a show, or even one that we play, we're still socially awkward, and we can't… I don't even know why, but it'd probably be a lot easier to be involved if we talked to people, especially since everyone else is so much older in Chicago. Everybody is old there, besides the Latino scene, which is younger, but the hardcore scene is really mature and we're not mature in any way.
John: I would say as a band statement that we are anti-maturity. At least I am. Stay young till I die.

MRR: Okay well one thing that's always struck me as weird with you guys is that we love to hang out and drink and party and stuff but it seems like when there's a party you guys are gone, but if there's only a couple of people there, you guys are there too. It seems like a lot of people in hardcore and punk deal with social issues like depression, does anyone deal with this, I mean is this what it stems from?
Nathan: I mean definitely to a big degree, the biggest factor especially with me, though no one in our band is cool, like I went through four years of high school as well as Sean and John and Corey, and I went through all of high school without having a girlfriend or going to a party once. Actually, I went to a party with Corey once and that was the only time. I have never gone to any parties or hung out with any people, I've never had multiple friends. The only people that are my friends are literally the three people in my band. We're not too keen on people and we're not too used to the party environment and it just sucks. It's cunt life. The worst environment to be in, people just waiting around to finger-fuck someone, that sucks. Like I'm fine with getting fucked up, it's fun as hell but I'd rather do it with three of my good friends in my room listening to records as opposed to being at a party and having to bullshit and talk about the stupid same shit over and over all the time. It's just a drag.

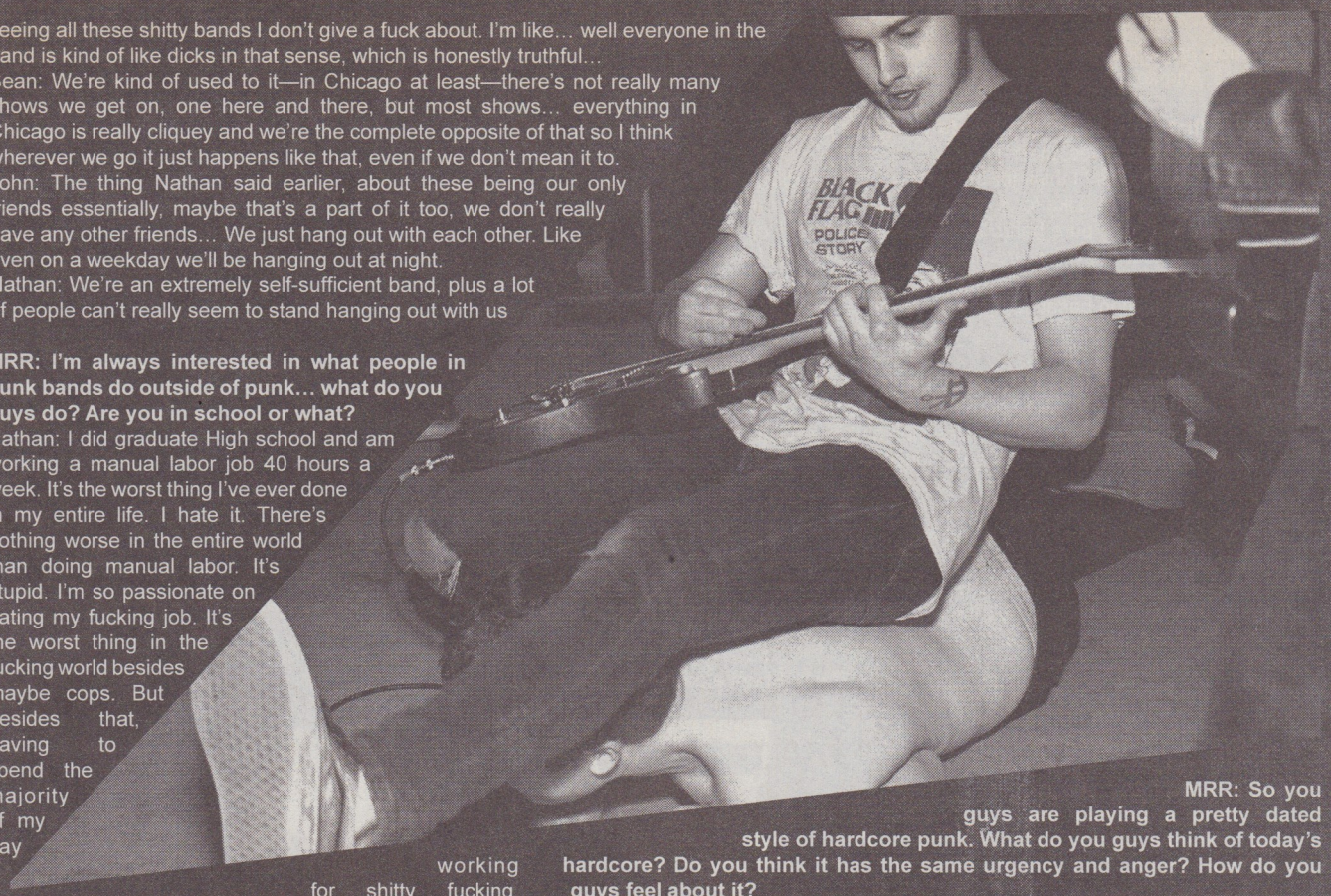
MRR: Yeah. Anyone else want to comment?

Corey: I think it would be nice and we could better ourselves if we socialized a little more, obviously. I can't get you three to ever do anything so I just go with the group I guess. Like I'm down with talking to people even though I don't have much to say and I'm awkward, but I can see the benefits of doing it. But you guys don't do it so I give up easily.
Nathan: I personally do not care at all. I'm going to be in my own band regardless.
John: I'm mostly just anti-party and I've never really been to a party besides like hanging out. I read Conan novels and…
Nathan: Yeah. Sometimes he won't even hang out with us, he'll just go home and go home and read a book… like Conan.

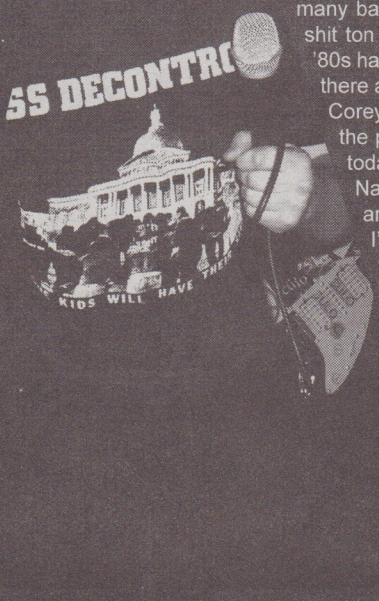
MRR: In hardcore and punk it's supposed to be such a community, like through being in and watching bands, but I think a lot of people deal with depression and anxiety. When I was younger and people would sit outside, I would never think about how the people coming to these shows were fucked up people who possibly dealt with some of these issues. It's like taking a whole bunch of fucked up people and putting them in a room and telling them to get along.
Nathan: Yeah, a bunch of people who don't want to be alive that much anyways, and like "force yourselves and jump around in the pit".

MRR: Yeah and like force yourselves to get involved in something… Do you ever come across people who wonder why you aren't inside or why you're anti-social as a band?
All: Yeah….
Corey: Yeah. I have a good example, remember when we went to see Perdition in Chicago? We hung out with the bassist of Perdition when we toured New York, then when he came out to Chicago and there was like kind of a little party going on in the back yard. Then it was literally like the four of us and him sitting around in a circle. He was like, "so this is what you guys do? You don't talk to anyone or anything? And we were like "nah".
Nathan: Yeah, people say "oh, you're anti-social… that's cool," but they're all partying big time. Even in our hometown. Everyone in the band has pretty refined tastes and like punk rock is my life. I'm not even punk rock. I'm a punk. It means more to me than a badass bracelet. And my taste in music, as well as everyone in this band is pretty refined and I'm not cool with listening to anything. I like music too, just because a band is playing fast doesn't mean I'm going to instantly lick it up. I also want to hear good fucking bands. I understand not every band can be great, but sometimes I get sick

seeing all these shitty bands I don't give a fuck about. I'm like… well everyone in the band is kind of like dicks in that sense, which is honestly truthful…
Sean: We're kind of used to it—in Chicago at least—there's not really many shows we get on, one here and there, but most shows… everything in Chicago is really cliquey and we're the complete opposite of that so I think wherever we go it just happens like that, even if we don't mean it to.
John: The thing Nathan said earlier, about these being our only friends essentially, maybe that's a part of it too, we don't really have any other friends… We just hang out with each other. Like even on a weekday we'll be hanging out at night.
Nathan: We're an extremely self-sufficient band, plus a lot of people can't really seem to stand hanging out with us



MRR: I'm always interested in what people in punk bands do outside of punk… what do you guys do? Are you in school or what?
Nathan: I did graduate High school and am working a manual labor job 40 hours a week. It's the worst thing I've ever done in my entire life. I hate it. There's nothing worse in the entire world than doing manual labor. It's stupid. I'm so passionate on hating my fucking job. It's the worst thing in the fucking world besides maybe cops. But besides that, having to spend the majority of my day working for shitty fucking wages, when I'm not doing that my life is completely controlled by punk. It's like the only thing. I skate, play D and D, comics, star wars, punk rock, and hardcore. My band fills up my entire day. I sit there for 8 hours and think about writing songs, lyrics, records coming out, my life revolves completely around punk and hardcore, and that's all I ever want to know.
John: I graduated high school, but mostly I'm just in this band. I just quit my job and am going to school to be a massage therapist. I like to write shitty ass short stories too. That's about it.
Sean: I graduated high school a while ago and went to college for a bit and failed every class and stopped going. Then I started working and I obviously hate it, but the band is everything. It's all I do besides work.
Corey: Graduated high school in 2006. Definitely some of the worst years of my life, but if it wasn't for them I wouldn't be in this band right now. I met these guys through it so it is what it is. Then I started going to CC in Elgin and basically have been dicking around there ever since and taking a couple classes here and there; failing sometimes, succeeding others, and I'm still there. I don't know exactly what I'm doing, but I'm there so I'm like "what the hell…" I'm giving in. I work maybe 30-40 hours a week at Target filling all the dairy products and honestly I'm fine with it. It's cool. I don't mind it too much. It's easy, and it's cold and I get paid shitty. It's fine. I don't have to talk to anybody. It's the first job I've had that I've been okay with. Besides that, this band is a big part obviously.



MRR: So you guys are playing a pretty dated style of hardcore punk. What do you guys think of today's hardcore? Do you think it has the same urgency and anger? How do you guys feel about it?
Sean: I think it's older people who all wear flannels and vans and go to college and are art students…
Corey: And then there's us. That's what I see when I go to shows, a bunch of college kids.
Sean: But it's different depending on where you go. Obviously I don't know what it was like back in the day because I wasn't there. But I guess we just try to make the best of it as we go. Seems like everything is wayyy too trendy now… too cliquey. But there's nothing you can do about it except try to make it better through every show you play.
John: Hardcore is still relevant today, but seriously fuck people who go to art school who cannot draw. I am so sick of that.
Nathan: My answer is different to everyone elses. I think honestly, hardcore today is better. If you have the mentality that hardcore sucks now I think that's bullshit because if you're involved in punk and hardcore, even in the past couple years there have been so many bands, there are so many good bands out there. There's a shit ton of bands that blow me away. And as much as I love my '80s hardcore, you have to give a fuck about what's going on now, there are so many fucking good bands, I think.
Corey: Everything has to progress constantly. You can't live in the past… I think there are a lot of bands that are really great today it's just the social part of it.
Nathan: But, yeah, fuck that. If I'm just thinking of bands that are around today that I think are good I think of a shit load. I'm really excited on the fact that I'm into so many bands that are around nowadays because I hate the whole "shit was good, I don't care about now". I think we have a sound that draws from '80s hardcore, but I'm not really down with the whole power violence grind core thing. That's fine, I just like my punk catchy too. There's an awesome touring network, I mean we're a shit band that no one gives a fuck about and we can tour and play awesome shows and met awesome people. Including you. I think shit's great. There are some really great tools out there for being really D.I.Y. and really self-sufficient. We have tools now that make it way easier than it used to be. I had no

contacts and booked a tour years ago online and I was just some random person. It's pretty badass. And so innovative.

MRR: What are some of the bands you guys are into right now?
Nathan: The Ramones, that's it.
Nathan: New bands? I think for the past while Civic Progress and Cardiac Arrest have owned my life. Like for a while. Bunny Skulls. A band you introduced to me. Anything that's pure hardcore punk rock. Smart Cops... even though I don't know what the lyrics are about. Great band, but I don't know what they're singing about. So many great bands. Carbonas... that's too broad of a question because there are so many bands I could fill that with.

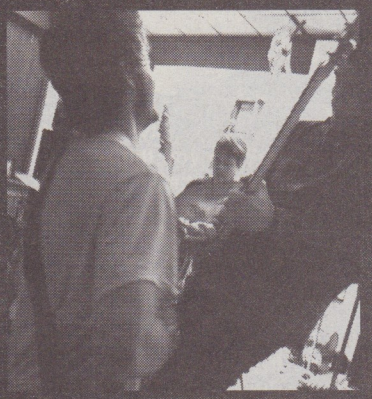
MRR: Is there any agenda lyrically that fuels this band?
Nathan: John and me write all the lyrics... John's lyrics are about anti-war, post-apocalyptic, lifestyles and like living in ruins and wastelands... which is obviously horrible, and we're not trying to glorify anything, but mutants can be pretty cool. The other half is about John; more mental problems and being institutionalized as a child.
John: I was a sad boy.
Nathan: And the majority of mine are about hating work and hating life. So it's a broad spectrum, which is really cool.

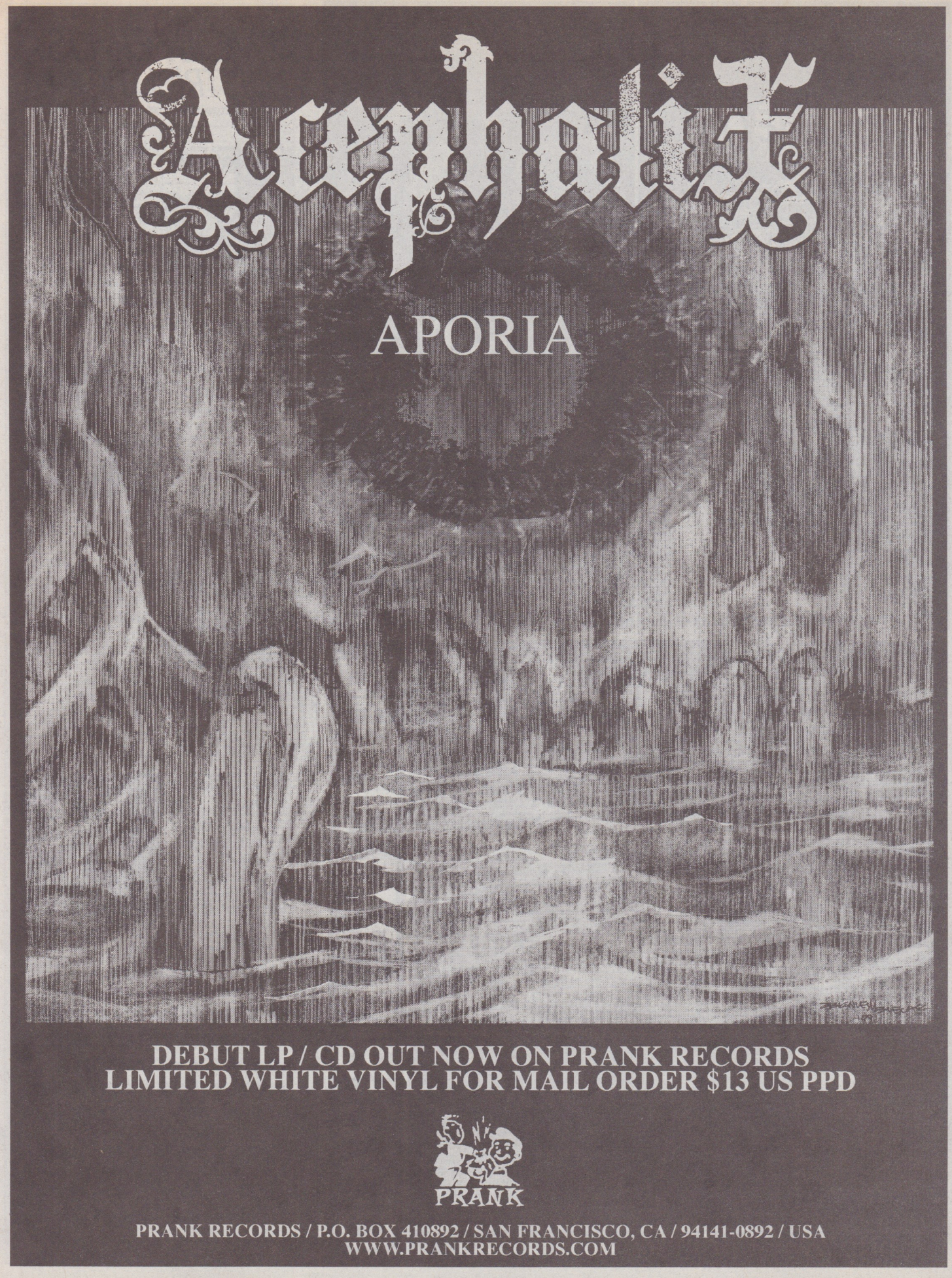
MRR: You may have noticed some of the older bands that have gotten back together now are more right wing than they were in the '80s. What do you think about the right-wing stance in punk and hardcore?
Nathan: Cülo hates normals. We just don't give a fuck about those people. They had their time

MRR: Why does Cülo have two guitar players and no bass player?
Nathan: Because bass is slow and heavy, and we're the youth. We want to be fast. Who needs bass? That's the only answer I have.
John: Bass is for normals and we hate normals.
Nathan: If you could just listen to bass or guitar what would you listen to? You'd listen to guitar; it's that simple.

MRR: So for final ending, is there anything you want to add? Bands? Contact?
Nathan: 138 Melrose Ave. South Elgin, IL... stay punk and stab fascists and definitely check out Bunny Skulls and State. Everything State embodies is what hardcore is about. If you can be that fucking old... after seeing all those bands from the same era, they're all old, they're all jaded, they all have guarantees... State are old dudes that have been ripping it forever and they still do shit on a DIY level. It's fucking awesome. That's what I want to be doing when I'm that age.

John: Shoot a cop, kill a jock, and fuck war.





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Pekinška Patka

PODERIMO ROCK!
LET'S TEAR THE ROCK APART!
PROFESSOR ĐONTA OF PEKINŠKA PATKA

No other band did more to define the explosive, eclectic and energetic punk scene in Yugoslavia that blossomed in the late '70s and early '80s than Pekinška Patka. Their sound, lyrics, attitude, aesthetic; their manic, raw energy performances—everything—remains one of the most charismatic and emblematic archives of the passion and significance that punk meant in that region for a generation. And now more than 30 years later, the music still stands the test of time as a testament to when punk meant everything.

Though it seems somewhat cheap and superfluous for me to reference an online video in the course of this introduction (especially in one of the last international, print-only punk publications out there), probably the best way to get a taste of the visible power and significance of Pekinška Patka is to watch the first clips that will come up when you search their name on YouTube — and especially footage from a seminal concert in May 1979. The show is taking place in what looks like a plaza outside a large supermarket. Young excited Yugoslav punk kids are going totally crazy, and the band has the look and spirit that is instantly recognizable as both sincere and timelessly classic. It isn't until 30 seconds into the song that you first see Professor Čonta, the band's charismatic frontman, lunge into the foreground, manically pogo-ing in a white suit and tie with sunglasses — and at that moment the crowd of kids just goes completely wild. If the internet hasn't yet completely numbed your senses, a wide grin forms on your face and you immediately want to travel back in time to live that moment. It's plain to see from the footage that this band — and punk more generally — arrived in Yugoslavia like an earthquake; its raw and visceral influence on the alternative sub-cultural landscape of Yugoslavia in the years that followed being no less powerful.

While writing up this interview, I went back again to that video. The band is playing inside a huge glass enclosure — almost like a giant shop-window elevated above the audience – presenting a stark, spectacular, and symbolic visual of punk's presence in the Balkans. As Čonta recounts below, watching the spit that collected on the

PUNK ROCK IS THE BEST! EVERYTHING ELSE IS SHIT!

glass move slowly down the window as the band went on with their hyper-charged set, "it was almost as if we were spitting on all of society." For this and more the band was absolutely viewed as a threat — both by adoring fans and by the State itself, which closely monitored the band's activities of the band and tried — often in vain —to make sure certain lines were not crossed. Though much of Pekinška Patka's social dissidence, nonconformity, and iconoclastic inclinations were often kept, as Čonta says, "between lines", it is equally plain to see that Pekinška Patka (whose name translates to Peking Duck in English) didn't just "push the envelope" of what was deemed socially and politically acceptable, they also broke boundaries in radical ways which helped create new spaces and possibilities for a youth subculture to thrive.

As one of my Yugoslav friends puts it, "Pekinška Patka was the most courageous punk rock band in socialist Yugoslavia. Not because they were explicitly political, but because they spoke about the challenges of everyday life in a state-socialist society. Yugoslavia was a state existing between two worlds, state-socialist and capitalist. Pekinška Patka was a band existing between those same worlds — voicing that tension, and making it explicit."

When I discovered Pekinška Patka some years ago, I knew from the first time I heard "Biti ruzan pametan I mlad" ("Be ugly, smart and young") that this band from Novi Sad had made an impact beyond what could be calculated for someone a generation behind and on the other side of the world. They had existed as a punk band in Tito's Yugoslavia — transcending and breaking barriers that even the most iconic bands in "the West" did not even have to contemplate contending with. As a result, their story and influence for bands and punks to come, even after the breakup of Yugoslavia, remains an amazing one.

I was excited and humbled to catch up in person with Professor Čonta —pronounced "Chonta," but whose real name is Nebojsa Čonkic, the creative mind and iconoclastic voice behind Pekinška Patka – in Toronto where he now lives and teaches. In coordinating for this piece, Čonta responded to a message sent from a fan in San Francisco, saying simply "I am glad you have contacted me… Let's meet and talk about the old and new times." Below is the interview that transpired.

Interview by Spencer Rangitsch.

Photos taken from Novosadska Punk Verzija *and the MRR record collection.*

MRR: So let's start at the beginning. How did you discover punk?

Radio Luxembourg. I was listening to Radio Luxembourg since my early teens. 208 AM. You could hear it even in Serbia! But only at midnight, and the only position from where I could hear it was from my kitchen window—midnight by the window, nowhere else! [laughs] And only with that small radio! So I was always in the kitchen listening to that radio from 11:00 'til 2:00 every night, always late for school and tired the next day. In the progressive days of the early '70s, it was Genesis and Pink Floyd, *Darker of the Moon*-era. I was seventeen. Then later they also started promoting punk—Pistols, Stranglers, Damned, Clash, Buzzcocks, and usually after midnight—when it was the best reception! I was already in university by then, but I thought, "My god! This is different!" I liked it immediately. Then in 1978 I went to summer school in London for a month learning English, but basically every second night I was at the gig! It was no problem, because I like to study actually. But I watched my best ever gig there: It was the Specials, Suicide and the Clash. I was stunned by the Specials—"punk-reggae." We didn't know ska back then, it was "punk-reggae." And then Suicide with Alan Vega, and the Clash promoting *Give 'Em Enough Rope*. That was absolutely *it* for me. So after I came back, everything started—we made a punk band.

MRR: How did the band form?

Basically a couple friends from my university, we wanted just to have fun really. Maybe parties for fifty people—that was our target. No money, no nothing, fun and that's it—kill the boredom! Our first gig was at the university. Four of our friends came and we had four songs. We were kind of anxious—"Are they going to completely think this is rubbish?" But they actually said, "This is good! Some people might like it!"

MRR: Was there a punk look at the time? What was the reaction to punk in Novi Sad?

No, I was the only one at the time! [Laughs] At least initially... I was an exceptional student at the university, one of the best students with a normal look. And then suddenly I changed my look: I cut my hair very short, put on an old, very baggy shirt, and I borrowed my dad's old suit from twenty years before. And I wore that with baggy pants and dirty tennis shoes — always dirty tennis shoes! Also a tie, loosely laced, and with big badges on my jacket. And that was the look! I'm famous for the badge that said, "I was a punk before you!" [Laughs], but also a PEKINŠKA PATKA badge, and one that said "*Plitka poezija*" —shallow poetry—which would later be the name of our album. But I had this

badge six months before we even wrote any songs! [Laughs]

MRR: So what was the story behind the name of that album?
We were introducing slang and sex talk in the songs for shock value. Because we were a communist country... You see, Yugoslavia in that way—we were happy—because it was not Soviet Union or "real communism" like in the Soviet Union or the satellite states. We were in between and we were lucky because of that—we had more freedom. But at the same time, whenever we approached the studio for demos they didn't care at all how I sing, they just said, "Before you enter the studio, give me the lyrics," and then they checked the lyrics! They didn't care about the music at all—I could *na-na-na* all day long. But they said, "Give us the lyrics." They were reading them for if we were attacking the communist party or the state—so we drew the line: "OK, if we do that we will go to jail immediately." Or, as I predicted later, almost like I had a vision—as if a truck-trailer would pick us up on the side of the road and we would all be dead. Later, that was the way the secret service—15 years later, when Milosevic was in power—how they tried to get rid of some of the prominent opposition leaders. And so I predicted that, then it was, "OK, am I going to jail or no?" We don't want that. So we decided, no politics—at least not up front. We are just "sex punk" up front and we discussed the larger issues with the music—between lines, but no direct references.

MRR: In the beginning what was the reaction to the live performances?
Some people laughed, others were disgusted. But very soon after we started having gigs in our hometown—small gigs—and kids picked it up. And because we could travel in those days, it was very popular to go to Italy to go to Trieste for shopping—jeans, fancy jackets, fancy shirts and spend a lot of money there. And so our propaganda was, "Fuck that! Screw that! Why go there? Borrow from your uncle! That culture is *zero*!" And that was our propaganda. And also for our first gig we had these pamphlets, like manifestos: "Punk rock is the best! Everything else is shit! We are the best band in the country!" [Laughs] It was bullshit, but anyway... And also, "You should dress for zero dinars!"

But one of the worst was, you know, real punk rock at that time, they never write too much about the girls. So, we said, you should wait for them to attack *you* or otherwise you listen to the white plum — you know, *bela sljiva*. Because that song ("*Bela sljiva*," or "White Plum" in English) is about being rejected, and having to satisfy yourself, because the real lyrics are about masturbation and about being rejected and you don't have anyone else and now you have to please yourself again! [Laughs] And it was revolutionary because I had to censor myself tremendously in those days—everything was between lines. That was the first single, but I could not use any strong words, it was just... you had to understand that if you are rejected and you don't have a girlfriend, what else can you do? [Laughs]

MRR: How were you able to organize the recording?
Because fortunately—of course the political press was not free, but press about singers, about groups, that was free. And they supported us! They saw something new, something fresh, and almost 90% of journalists did support us immediately, which was strange. And actually they wrote that we were much better musicians than we actually were, initially, because we were amateurs! One of them even wrote, "They are 2000 light years ahead of their time!" We were not, obviously, but it was in order to sell the paper! [Laughs] And it also helped that we were very photogenic...

And the gig! Now, I may not sound very modest about this: I *never* saw a band, I saw so many gigs in my life, where there was that much sweat at the gig like there was with us at the beginning. It was a 45-minute gig? For my 45 minutes I'm losing five to six pounds! [Laughs] So we were completely exhausted after every gig, which was like 45 minutes! Now a band can play for three hours and they're like, "Ok, we go to the hockey game or basketball game after that?" No! After that we are totally dead! [Laughs] Because we jumped, we would pogo! That was what was really exciting for everyone. Because that was— "Wow! How can they jump and sing at the same time?" Because we would practice that! [laughs] In the practice room, the drummer had a guest room at his place, and we would practice jumping—jump, jump, jump and play! And that's what attracted to our early reviewers and the journalists.

MRR: Not to mention the audience at the shows! But wasn't it the message too? The B-side to the record is "Biti ružan, pametan i mlad": Be ugly, smart and young. I mean, this is a quintessential punk anthem if ever I've heard one, which totally must have gone hand-in-hand with the look of the band and the live performance at the time.
Yes, and people liked that a lot. I mean, imagine that you are a teen and you are obviously, you know... not very happy, but we come along and say, "You are right!" Someone says, "You are right. You are better than all of them because you listen to us and you dress like us — you are actually superior!" It was living propaganda! And it worked! Don't go for false styles like dressing in Italy or whatever!

At that time you had three groups of people. The first group was listening to folk music, we actually ignored them, they were like peasants, low class for us, we ignored them completely. Now, ironically this is what is "Serbian." They are the great majority now, because one of the consequences of the Milosevic regime is turning a rock mentality into a folk mentality — "Turbo-folk." Besides obviously losing territory, losing life, one of the biggest consequences of him being in power was—no more rock and roll, now everything's turbo folk. But at the time, they were irrelevant to us! Nobody listened to that! So it was completely irrelevant. So if you eliminate them you

have two groups left: old hippies who still listened to Black Sabbath or Led Zeppelin or whoever with the long hair and the long songs — so we despised them as well. Then you had disco guys, discoman, "disco-manics" like we called them in Serbia, who listened to John Travolta and that kind of bullshit. So then there was a fourth group: if you're not into hippie music, if you're not into disco, and if you're not into turbo folk—you were nowhere. And there was a pretty huge share of the population who was nowhere. And then we came, with punk and new wave...

MRR: So then that was more or less how the scene really began in Yugoslavia at the time, right?
Actually we started developing the punk/new wave scene first in Novi Sad, then in Belgrade. Coincidentally, in Slovenia – Slovenia was the most liberal part of Yugoslavia – Pankrti appeared before we did and that punk was very good, but very much under the influence of Sex Pistols, music and tactics and all that. Our music was an amalgam of everything because we were all over the place: our drummer was jazz oriented, our guitarist Sreten, he knew how to play cello saxophone, and also he has lots of other influences. And me, I have just my instincts and my feelings and the fact that I listen to punk! So, It was an amalgam of all three. It wasn't like, "Ok, we are going to copy Sex Pistols"... No, no... We were going to develop everything! So our music was very melodic because all three of us basically listened to melodic music.

And basically when I heard later, much later, when Green Day, Blink 182, all these guys—Ok, these guys! Did they listen to me? Where are my royalties? [Laughs] Because that was melodic punk again! Of course, supported by multimillion-dollar deals! [Laughs] But it felt good—melodic punk, we won. I was not into groups that just spit the words in anger with no melody like lots of punk bands and post-punk bands in early '80s, specifically British, were like that. It was boring to me, so I listened to a lot of new wave too. I listened to a lot of Echo and the Bunnymen and The Cure!

MRR: Right, and those later influences explain a bit of your musical shift with the second LP, *Strah od monotonije ("Fear of Monotony")*. Explain how that happened and the reaction to that shift in direction.
That was a huge shift. Because we lost two members: Sreten left, our original guitarist, and formed the ska band Kontraritam [Counterbeat in English]. And the original bass player Bora left also because he was kind of.... unstable. [Laughs] He's a very cool guy, but a bit unstable as a personality.

MRR: Was he the guy who turned his back on the audience because he didn't want to go on tour to Bosnia?
Yeah, that was the Split festival. The Split festival is basically a festival with pop songs influenced by Italian canzona [Italian pop songs, very popular in Yugoslavia]. It was a rock evening and we were there promoting our first album. We had a lot of support there. But he was disgusted: there were so many fans there—it was, I don't know, ten to fifteen thousand people—and he was disgusted with it. He said something like, "Ok, we are going to sell ourselves now!" [Laughs]. So he turned his back and was just jamming one chord the whole time—*dung dung dung* — the whole concert! [Laughs] 40 minutes! Which is, you know... Sid Vicious didn't do that! But after that, he left. So I basically stayed with my drummer and then we got two new members. The difference was these guys *really* knew how to play.

I never meant to earn anything, I didn't want that basically *at all*. In one of my songs, I said "I don't want the money" [in "*Ja Sam Panker U Sakou Starom,"* or "I am the punker in the old suit of my father."] I sang, "*pare pare pare* — I don't want the money!" [*pare* means "money"]. Basically we wanted to be kind of famous and kind of push that with the music we like. That was our agenda, that's it. So what could we do? Make a similar album to the first for the second, make even more similar one as the third? Because nobody earned money on the first album. Like the Cure, who I adore, they made it on the fifth by pushing the same agenda. But then I thought, "Fuck it: Lets make a u-turn." And the rest of the band liked it because we had started listening to Joy Division, Cure, Echo and the Bunnymen and Simple Minds... Ok, it's quite a bit different! And then we made that album that was it... It's like a different group with different singing and different lyrics. But I'm proud of that because it's ahead of its time, even for England!

MRR: And now you've almost been vindicated again because there are so many groups currently who are influenced primarily by that period and that sound. That's everywhere now!
We were doing it in 1981 in Yugoslavia!

MRR: Before that you guys did the other single "Bila Je Tako Lijepa" ("She Was So Beautiful"), which is by far the most raging, almost "hardcore punk," song of yours.
Again, because these guys could play. We produced that ourselves and it's the only single that's self-produced. That's like a punk anthem in Yugoslavia now! Everybody loves that, even in Slovenia, Croatia... everybody loves that song! It's interesting too because it's the song of a very old famous pop singer, Dragan Stojnić. He was a crooner, you would say, like Al Martin, or a Frank Sinatra of Yugoslavia. Many people fell in love with that song and then we, you know, smashed it!

MRR: Was that your idea?
Most of the ideas are mine. [Laughs] Crazy ideas, mine. I don't know chords. I don't differentiate F and G. How could I actually make the song? I can imitate guitar with my mouth! [Laughs]. Then I would tape it, and we would listen! But anyways, for a week, every radio station played that song — and then, suddenly, nothing. Like somebody told them, "Ok, no more of this song on the radio." Because they probably... the Keepers of the Faith, they realized, "Ok, they are kind of ridiculing that old song, maybe they are also ridiculing our system." So after that week nobody broadcasted it again.

MRR: I read that the first album was delayed because of the death of Tito.
That's another story, because we were kind of in a mode, we were advancing, we were ahead of the time and then suddenly Tito got sick! We went to book a gig – "How can you have a gig when Tito is sick!" We lost so many gigs and so many promotions in the crucial

time! And then our first album, *Plitka poezija,* was delayed four or five months because of his sickness. That was crucial, otherwise it would probably be even commercial, but these four months did the job.

MRR: Yeah, I mean I've read that the first single sold 35,000 copies...
Yeah, which is unbelievable for Yugoslavia! You would be #1 in Britain! But the album got delayed because Tito got a leg amputated. "Marshal Tito is on one leg and you want to have a punk gig!? Shame on you!" And it was like that! It happened many times, the show was cancelled at the last moment. And actually that hurt us a lot.

MRR: How did you get your nickname?
Because my last name is Čonkic, first three letters and then you get the nickname, ta. I got it in the high school where I taught. What helped us tremendously was that I was a "punk professor." That media salivated over that— "Imagine this guy teaching your kid!" and then my picture. "No!" [Laughs] But that actually did us a favor, because people either despised us completely, most of them, or a big share of them actually admired us because of that.

MRR: What were you teaching?
In the high school, electrotechnic [sort of a school of engineering; a form of craft/trade education in Yugoslavia at the time].

MRR: Did you have students who were punks? Did they want to take your class?
Oh, lots of them! Initially, without party influence — and when I think of this now, Yugoslavia was still a pretty happy place — because initially I was admitted as a professor in the high school. And I immediately told them [the administration] that I have a band. No problem. And sometimes it would happen that I just finish my class, go home, come back with my band, and the same students would come and listen! It was so free! Until we became kind of bigger than that, you know, more "important." And then some kind of gatekeepers, as I call them, they called my principal—"What are you doing? What is this guy doing?!" and then suddenly it came down: "You cannot play anymore." They wanted to kick me out of the school because of that. So I gave an interview to the Socialist Youth newspaper—there was only socialist youth! No capitalist youth! [Laughs] He was taping everything. And I was going, "Fuck him, screw that... fuck this jerk..." And *then...* They released it unedited! [Laughs] I thought he would kick out these words! No he didn't! And this was freely distributed in every high school! [Laughs] So everyone said, "Oh my god! They are going to kick you out!" And me, "I didn't want that! That's the editor's stuff! Call the editor, not me!" So there was a big affair with all that and so on. But *then*! You see, you have to understand that Yugoslavia was a big experiment in those days, so-called "workers self-rule." You had a council of workers who can veto the director or CEO or whatever and they can put in their own. And everything was publicly shared. Even in schools, you had a council of students who could veto the principal. And he wanted to kick me out, but they threatened with a strike in school if he did that! And he got scared! Imagine that here in any society! So actually Yugoslavia really was a one-party society, but with the fragments of a very free country, because the students, they kept me there. "You have to teach, that's it." Unbelievable. So I'm kind of proud of that. [Laughs] It is an amazing story: how one society can be dictatorial on one side, but the other side is completely not, even more democratic than so-called democratic societies! I am very proud of that, because we really were a truly experimental society in those days.

MRR: In a sense, the band too represented that experimentation, pushing of the envelope of what was accepted.
Yeah, and actually we were also blowing up condoms! We were ahead of the time with that too. That was before AIDS. We had a song, "What made us so close? Condom!" (from the song "*Kontracepcija*".) During the song we were blowing up condoms and throwing them into the audience. Later, the audience would come every gig and throw blown up condoms at us! [Laughs] So before AIDS, we did that. On the other hand, that was also in the newspapers– "Would you like your child to be taught by this guy!?" [Laughs]

MRR: What was the story with proclaiming yourselves the "First Orthodox Punk Band"?
We were the first Orthodox punk band in the world. In the Orthodox world—Russia, Ukraine, Romania... —there was no punk. In those times, religion was seen as dangerous. There was a thing that I wanted to do and all of the other members refused: there is an anthem that was very popular in Serbia about the founder of the Orthodox church, Saint Sava, in the 12th century that was very popular before the Second World War. When the Communists came they said "no religion." So I told the band, "We have a gig in Belgrade next month. Lets arrange that song as an encore!" "But we are going to be in jail for sure!" They [the band] got scared, because they would have kicked us in jail for couple of weeks with torture—that's for sure. But I wanted that. That is my greatest unfulfilled wish to have done that. Because if you do that now, when the church is back in the society, it doesn't mean anything anymore. People would accuse me of being a nationalist, but at that time I would be again ahead of the time by twenty years! [Laughs] But, I would be in jail. I really wanted that though, and I was ready for that

Bora, Cila, Čonta i Sreta

because we had been threatened. The secret service was all around us. Here is another story: I'm sitting with my girlfriend in the restaurant having a drink, then a guy comes up like there is nowhere to sit, and he wants to sit with us. No problem. He is sitting with us and says, "Do I know you from television?" *Blah blah blah...* "Aren't you the punk professor?" And suddenly after just fifteen minutes of being with us he's offering me, "Would you like a very well paying job with this decent company?" Because he wanted to remove punk professor—my influence on the kids—because if I'm working for some company and they pay me a big amount of dinars, I'm not that threat anymore.

MRR: Can you tell the story behind what happened at Stepanovićevo **and "God Save Martin Bormann"?**
Oh my god. Fortunately nobody in the audience knew English, that's the bottom line. This guy caused a bunch of shit. And, Bunch of Shit, that's the name of the group! [Laughs} Bora, the bass player on the first album, he played with them at the time and after that he joined us. They had a very charismatic singer who unfortunately died in London a couple years ago. They made a song about Martin Bormann: instead of "God Save the Queen" they rearranged that song so it was "God Save Martin Bormann." It was a catchy tune, but in English fortunately. It was kind of their best song.

MRR: But there wasn't anything fascist about it or anything...
No, no, no! Irony, a joke, a challenge! Of course! Nobody was fascist, who would be fascists? We suffered the most! But it was kind of an ironic challenge. Fortunately nobody understood, because that was a celebration of the liberation of that city from German occupation! [Laughs]

While I was eating at a gig where Bunch of Shit was our supporting band and they were singing that song. And our drummer came up, "Čonta! They are playing that song about Bormann! What are we going to do?" And I'm eating piglet, you know, with a full mouth—I remember that. "OK, nobody will understand it," I said. And I kept on eating my piglet. We had the show and it was beautiful. Fortunately, nobody understood it because who knew English back then in the small villages. But that was also interesting because we introduced punk to the cities that didn't even have *rock* in them! We introduced them to *punk* immediately! But this story is about a village with 3000 people. And instead of having, I don't know, a band covering Led Zeppelin, you had a punk band. Imagine that! We pushed that. We went there, we were not ashamed. OK, small city—great! People were anxious to see something new, so they came.

MRR: It seems like there are so many of these amazing anecdotes and incidents. What was the story behind the show in the glass display case in front of the supermarket?
Actually, that is the story of why we didn't make a lot of money. Because that video was shot in June 1979 when nobody was sure what would happen next. If that video was promoted, let's say in September, before our first single, our first single instead of 35,000 copies would have gone to 100,000, and immediately we would go for the album and be very successful and professional. We played seven songs in the shop window, we were there with our fans all around and it's all totally ahead of its time.

MRR: And people are going totally crazy in that video!
People are going crazy, yes, but then they *banned* it, and it was in the bunker for nineteen years! They finally released it after nineteen years, but imagine if they released it in those three months! One of the biggest things with that video—people were spitting on the window and they would see us singing, and how the spit was going down slowly... And they would think, "Oh my god, this is not spitting on the window, this is spitting on society!" So they put it in the bunker. Which was true! That was true! Everything was in between the lines in those days, nothing direct, because if you're direct you're in jail. Unfortunately it was in the bunker for nineteen years, but on the other hand *fortunately* it wasn't destroyed.

MRR: In a sense there really was a threat that the music posed to the system—a palpable feeling that isn't really there now with so much of "punk" nowadays, so I think it's almost hard for people now to imagine...
This was a threat, absolutely. Spitting on the shopping window in the one-party society? I'm very proud of that. That was one of the proudest pieces to be done. In that shopping window it was 40 degrees Celsius and we were jumping and singing. Imagine that! It was the middle of summer, no air conditioning, no windows, just imagine that. I would die now in that window for sure, but at that moment I could continue for forty minutes like my life depended on it.

MRR: Did you tour ever? Where did you play outside of Novi Sad and Belgrade?
We played mostly in Serbia, but our biggest solo concert with us as a headliner was in Sarajevo—3,000 people. The Clash didn't even have that, maybe in London, but we had it in Sarajevo. 3,000 people came for us.

MRR: And now years later with the breakup of Yugoslavia, that kind of crowd in Sarajevo for Pekinška Patka wouldn't really be the same, or even possible.
That's very sad. That's very sad because how I classify people is: smart or stupid, creative or boring, you know. Likes to listen to music I like–punk/new wave–or doesn't like to listen... That's how I classify people. Honest guy or sneaky guy. And that's sad because we had so many fans from other republics, probably even more than in Serbia.

MRR: How did the band break up?
I had to go to the army service. When I was 27 that was the final year for me to do the mandatory military service for one year. I could have probably faked it with some sort of mental disturbance—just by my appearance on the stage the doctors would have believed me! [Laughs] But I didn't want to do that. So I spent one year, the worst year of my life, obviously, because it's everything about arms, everything about propaganda... I don't want anything to do with that shit!

MRR: Did people know of you in the army?
Oh yeah! They prepared my whole unit with the idea that I'm a "pro-West" guy that would probably try to push his propaganda into the military unit and weaken the unit! Imagine that bullshit! I just wanted to survive! [Laughs] Nothing else! And everybody was briefed, "Ok,

this guy is coming who likes the West so much and Western ideals and *blah blah blah*..." I didn't! I just liked punk rock! And that's it!

MRR: So then you were back after a year?
Yeah, but then everyone was in different bands by then. You know, one year in that time is huge. When you're young, one year is like five years later. I was kind of depressed for a while after the army and I didn't have enough energy to start a third formation of the band, it would have had to be a third formation for a third album. I didn't have enough energy. Unfortunately, I regret it now, maybe if I would have pushed myself a little bit that would have been good. I regret it now, but back in those days...

MRR: But you stuck around and there was still a scene...
I resumed my career as a high school professor; I was still going to shows. I'm going to shows even today—lots of shows here in Toronto. But I don't like anything that resembles "emo." I'm listening to local radio stations and sometimes they push local bands, but I cannot distinguish one singer from another! And that's horrible. Because I remember what one guy told us, after seeing our gig, one of the most famous rock journalists in Yugoslavia ever, Petar Popović, he told me, "You will be a star... You guys, you will be stars." After seeing us at some humble gig? I thought this was bullshit. Why is this guy bullshitting? And then he asked me, "Do you know why?" Because he had heard our demo on the radio, he told me, "You know what? When your song is on the radio, everybody will know it's you." And that sentence I'm seeking even now in my life. Ok, do you have that *distinguish-ness*, when I know it's you? Or it's completely generic and faceless?

MRR: When did you come to Toronto?
I was an immigrant in 1994. My son was one year old. Because with Milosevic... It was undeclared war, there were sanctions over Serbia, there was poverty, there was no future, just like the Sex Pistols anthem. I had a one year old son, so I thought, "Ok, it's time to go to Canada," and Canada was nice to us. Obviously though, I still visit Novi Sad every year in the summertime and lots of my friends are still there.

MRR: What's your perspective from here on Yugoslavia and everything that happened?
I'm sad that it happened, but there will probably be no recovery from that. But we had so many fans and so many beautiful memories in all different parts of Yugoslavia... so it's very sad for me.

MRR: How did the recent reunion at the 2008 Exit Festival in Serbia come together?
Actually, I never wanted a reunion. I really thought the right thing to do was *not* to have a reunion, which is probably still correct. But the invitation to be in front of the Sex Pistols, that main stage, in front of so many people was too tempting for me. I'm human and we did it. But what is most interesting there is that nobody from the band was still involved in music. I'm not singing anywhere, the guitarist is not playing guitar anywhere, the bassist was a cook in Russia, and the drummer is inventing some kind of copper disc to protect your bil energy. You put it under the bed and it removes raw waves around your aura, because he's in Hare Krishna mode [Laughs] No, but he's really serious about it! He tries to promote this copper disc! But really, they're not musicians they're three kind of — "I sing in my bathroom still, but I'm not a musician." So it's unbelievable that the three gathered and that we could perform at actually a very high level. We performed with the Sex Pistols and 90% of the people said we were much better. OK, it was partially emotional, but our energy was so high. For Sex Pistols it was just another gig in a small country, but for us it was like *life*, legacy. And we played like that, and you could see it.

MRR: You played another show as well...
We had a promotional show that was just a small club, 200 people. That was beautiful. It was before the big gig just to prepare us. It was so good because I'm the kind of person who fortunately doesn't have stage fright—I don't know what that is, but after 27 years, in front of so many people, I went behind the scene before our gig and it was a sea of people — 25,000 people. I mean unbelievable! But then we went out and you could see a choir of hundreds of thousands... shouting my name! And *then* I got stage fright! For the first time in my life... Imagine, "Čonta! Čonta!" Oh my god! I didn't expect that! I didn't expect that many people shouting my name. We were welcomed back. Basically the crowd liked it very much. Even Croatian newspapers, which are majorly ethnic and biased, actually declared that we were better than the Sex Pistols. They declared it was a great gig.

MRR: Did you have any interaction with the Sex Pistols?
Just backstage. There was a portable toilet and Johnny Rotten was in there with his bodyguard in front of the toilet—like somebody backstage is going to attack him after he is done taking a shit?! Oh my god, that was brutal to me. After the concert, he went home with his bodyguard. I went home on foot. I was walking with my wife and then people started to shake my hand...that was an experience! Because I was walking with the people leaving the concert – that's punk. I was also listening to some guys, because obviously not everybody recognized me while I was walking in this huge crowd, and some people who I remember now from Slovenia said, "Oh my god! They demolished the stage!" meaning we were very good. People from Slovenia, not knowing that I'm listening to them, and it was... Wow. That's something. Instead of having a bodyguard that costs you a few dollars... That's not punk, that's corporate.

MRR: Were there bands from the UK or US that came to Yugoslavia in the early '80s?
Not many. Later, yes they did. But in that time not many. Later I watched Talking Heads, Stranglers, 1982-83. But initially, no. What was most important, and actually why we were most successful at least with the public was, in 1979, we were kind of in an initial stage and we applied for a youth music festival in Subotica. Every year they have it. We entered it with "*Bela sliva*," white plum, that's one of the first

songs we made. "Ok, lets go for fun," obviously. "They will kick us out immediately." Because you have a preliminary round, a final, and then you have a winner. And it was May 1979. No punk on TV *at all*. No mentioning of punk in the newspapers—this was still a communist country. I mean nothing, no Clash, no nothing. Our expectation was, that we'll just be there, talk to some journalists, maybe we'll get a record deal for a record. But at least it's paid and we'll have some fun… And we went immediately to the final! Immediately, because we really played well and that was something new. And I remember, there was the final on that night, and probably around then there was half of this big stadium, ten to fifteen thousand capacity. In the preliminary it was half full, but in the final it was completely full with 15,000 people. Then, we played our song. Basically, it was two stages—the other finalist, a singer, then us—singer/band, singer/band. While one is playing the other is preparing. It was always our trademark entrance. The band starts with the first riff and then I make my entrance, coming out like a kangaroo in the middle of the song! That was our entrance always. So I just heard some lady singing, and then the crowd was rumbling. Because the crowd reacted that here my band is on stage waiting, and it was two minutes, "White Plum." And we had a deal: when we finished the song, disappear in five seconds — you must disappear off the scene, and *really* disappear. And then, when we did that, a sound I never heard again in my life, I just heard this giant "*whoaaaaaaaaa,"* like thunder.

So after that, there were ballots for each finalist, and I heard later that our ballot was so ahead—and obviously a punk band can't win—so they put half of our ballots in the second contestant's box! [Laughs] So some lady from Croatia won. But our ballot was so ahead... But I still have a silver medal—officially second, but by far the first.

But that night, for the first time in any communist country there was a TV broadcast—for the first time, somebody in Macedonia or Croatia or Montenegro could see a punk band on Channel One. We had only two channels. Channel One, punk band, May 1979, for the first time. That was when we gathered so many supporters. Even from the big cities like Zagreb, they could not see Sex Pistols, there was no MTV, there was no anything, it was just Channel One and Channel Two. There was no download, there was no anything! And imagine that for someone who's fifteen years old, seeing us that night for the first time.

Years later I heard from people, "I was there that night. That was the moment." And lots of bands who were initially in the hard rock or hippy bands at the time, they formed later famous bands like Električni Orgazam in Belgrade, and Idoli. After that, many bands realized that they should do something; they should change their musical direction. So actually that night is a crucial night in TV history and Yugoslav music history, because it really created a lot of bands and a lot of other opinions.

MRR: Did you become close with other Yugoslav punk bands like KUD Idijoti, Pankrti, Paraf?
Not really, because they were so far away. They were more than 100 kilometers away so we cannot become close. We knew about them. So only with the Novi Sad scene and a little bit with the Belgrade scene, otherwise it's a huge distance.

MRR: There was some show where you dedicated a song to Goran Bregovic?
Yeah, we ridiculed all these guys, because they were kind of creeps. Rich, popular—we don't want that. We always ridiculed them. We usually ridiculed successful bands at our concerts, those who sold their soul or for selling too many albums.

MRR: Yeah, and that was essentially the ultimate meaning of "Poderimo Rock," right?
Yeah, and now it should be "Poderimo folk!" At that time, we just wanted to fight all boring rock and roll. We should ignore this "turbo folk" now. After Milosevic turbo folk is everywhere. Even if someone listens to hard rock or metal it's better than this! So the parameters changed, unfortunately.

MRR: Looking back, do you think punk give you an alternative perspective on everything that later unfolded with the breakup of Yugoslavia?
Yes, totally. We couldn't feel that coming. At that time I was deeply in love with a Hungarian girlfriend – she was Catholic, I was Orthodox. So that shows something. We were in our own world —no nationalism. Our world was new wave, punk. That was it.

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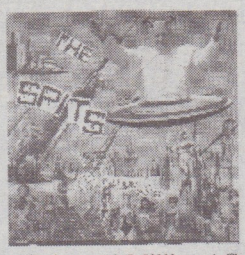

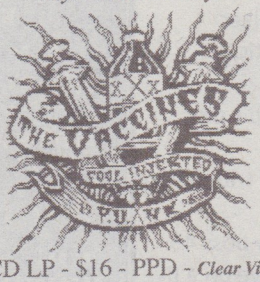

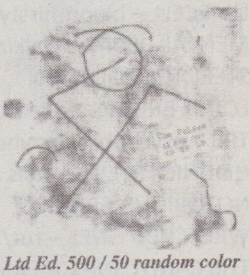

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THE CURSE

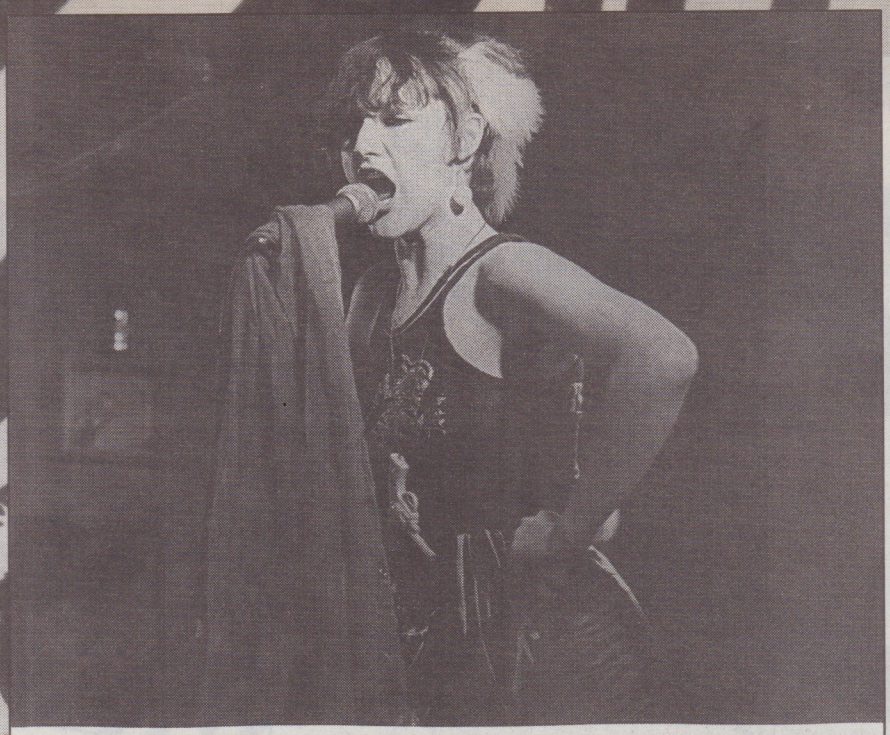
Treat Me Like Dirt: An Oral History of Punk in Toronto and Beyond
Book excerpt: Chapter 12: Down To Sane
By Liz Worth

IT WAS A REAL TRAIN WRECK. TOTAL CONFUSION TRAIN WRECK.... AND MICKEY WAS SO WILD. SHE'D DRESS UP IN TUTUS AND THROW FOOD AT THE AUDIENCE.

WHO'S WHO:

Caroline Azar: Vocalist, co-lyricist, and keyboardist for Fifth Column. Director, actor, and playwright.
Margaret Barnes-DelColle, aka Margarita Passion: Proprietor of Toronto's first punk store, New Rose. Power Street resident.
Anna Bourque: Bassist for the Curse, and True Confessions. Filmmaker.
Julia "Jula" Bourque, aka Trixie Danger: Guitarist for the Curse, and True Confessions.
Nora Currie: Fan.
Johnny Garbagecan (Zoltan Lugosi): Roadie for the Ugly. Zine maker.
John Hamilton: Drummer for the Diodes. Bassist for the Secrets.
Linda Lee, aka Patzy Poison: Drummer for the Curse, and True Confessions.
Gail Manning: The Curse manager.
Jeff Ostofsky: Fan. Roadie for various bands.
Mickey Skin: Singer for the Curse, and Bangkok.

Mickey Skin, Patzy Poison
photo: Ralph Alfonso



Mickey Skin, The Curse. Photo by Gail Bryck

Mickey Skin: There was this band called The Tools and they were supposed to play at a free school called SEED. It was on Bloor Street and I was going there. This dance teacher, Rolando Romaine, he kind of challenged me and said, "If you get a band together in three weeks you can do our opening set."Jula had been taking guitar lessons and I just went, "Oh yeah, let's do it!"

I had never thought much about being in a band before then. I always wanted to do acting and performing and I was in dance, so the band thing was just sort of a challenge; it was something fun to do. I was always a performer. I wouldn't say it was the music, it was more the performance opportunity.

It was also convenient because my parents were in Europe that summer so we took over the basement. It was like "Oh great, we can practice here." The neighbors put their house up for sale right away. Hahaha!

Julia Bourque: It was the spring of '77 and our friend Mickey got it going. She had a friend who was a songwriter who said, "You'd be great in a punk band." I had an instrument.

Mickey Skin: Then I met Freddy Pompeii at a music store. I was sort of doing sound so I was going to clubs a little bit and stuff like that. I said to him, "You gotta hear our band, we're practicing." We were just around the corner so I dragged him down there.

Anna Bourque: We had all worked at summer camp together and that's where Jula and I met Mickey, and Mickey and I became best friends. We were living together in a flat on Major Street when Mickey came home one day with Freddy behind her. He followed her up the stairs and she was saying, "We have a gig! We have a gig!" and we weren't anything. Hahaha!
And so it was, "Well, what's that mean?"
"We're gonna be a band and we have a gig with the Viletones."
We just sort of went along with it when she said, "Let's be a band."
"Oh, you're gonna be the singer? Okay."

Jula could play guitar so there were just two choices for me. Linda had been an ex-boyfriend of mine's ex-girlfriend. I was at Ryerson University doing film and I asked her if she'd be in my films and so I just said, "Do you want to be in our band?"

Linda Lee: It was an interesting dynamic because everybody was really different. Jula and Anna came almost from a heavy-duty feminist attitude. They loved Robert Altman films; they shared all of these major common bonds. I felt like I was an interloper, but only for a very short time. After playing together, I think after our first rehearsal, it was like we had known each other for centuries.

Julia Bourque: I was the only one who actually played an instrument, so I showed my sister how to play the bass. And a friend of ours, Linda Lee, she didn't know how to play the drums so we rented a set of drums and she kind of learned how to play. We had a couple of friends who could play instruments so they came over and coached us.

Linda Lee: Jula was the only one that had actually had musical training. I have a degree in music, but my degree is in voice. I guess they needed someone to play drums, so that was it.

"New Wave Music: No-Star Rock," by David Livingstone [*Maclean's*, April 7, 1980]: "Patzy Poison was not exactly Keith Moon on drums, but letting drop one of her heavily eyelined lids in a slow-motion wink in the middle of some old '60s boy-girl song, she was living proof that there are other talents besides musical proficiency."

Linda Lee: The first rehearsal, we were practicing in Mickey's basement and the Viletones had heard about us and they came to see us practise. They all came in through the main door except for Steven, who opened the basement window behind me and threw himself in.
That was the first time I met the Viletones. I used to see the Viletones walking around Yonge Street in their leathers with their girlfriends and stuff. My boyfriend and I would look at them and think, Who the fuck are these people? Not only just because they were incredibly interesting looking – some of them were seriously cute – but there was also an air about them that if you looked at them the wrong way they could, through telekinesis, slit your throat.

Anna Bourque: After Mickey met Freddy, the Viletones played at the

Ruby t's. Photo by Gail Bryck

St. Lawrence Hall, which is a beautiful room. Nobody knew what punk was then so you could book places and nobody would know what a disaster it would turn into for them.

I know that night I sat on Steven's face when he was singing. He walked out into the audience and I don't know whether he fell down, which was highly likely because he was prone to that after copious amounts of whatever it was, and I didn't wear underpants in those days. But we both got rather a shock because of course no matter where you play, if it's punk, everything's wet. Just suddenly beer's everywhere, *everywhere*. It was fantastic.

We saw them at the Colonial basement downstairs. It used to be the Meat Market. That was the first bar I ever drank in when I was a young teenager with my fake ID. The Viletones played there and Chris fell off the stage backwards but kept on playing, he didn't stop. He was fantastic.

Steven was breaking glasses then. What he did before he'd break the glass, he'd whirl his arms just to get the blood down there so that when he cut himself it was meaty, it really looked good. But he'd also say, "Cover your eyes," so nobody got glass in their eyes. Isn't that the sweetest thing you've ever heard? And then he'd smash the glass or the bottle and he'd cut himself.

Julia Bourque: I saw the Viletones at the Colonial Underground. That's where I first saw Steven Leckie cut himself. It was so gross. Oh gosh. He was just a kid; I'm sure he was younger than I was. The tough guy image was so silly because he wasn't really tough at all, he was actually from a pretty good background and was quite smart.

Mickey Skin: One thing led to another and the Tools heard the Viletones were gonna come to their concert, so they cancelled it because they were so afraid of them. But then the Viletones told us we could open for them at another gig.

Linda Lee: We were supposed to open for Mickey's friend's band called the Tools. It was at a dance studio or something, and they were so terrified of us when they saw us. I don't know why we were so intimidating. Maybe Anna and Mickey were just a little bit too powerful in the way they felt.

Anna Bourque: We lifted all our own equipment and we didn't depend on anybody for anything. We were solid citizens. No fakery, no girl-ery.

John Hamilton: I remember we had the Crash 'n' Burn open, and this was so long ago in Toronto that you would actually notice a poster on a telephone pole. Literally when the Zoom first started the Colonial Underground, we made posters and put them up downtown, which I think is how [Steven] Leckie and Lucasta [Ross, of the B-Girls] and all those people came to see us.

The poles in Toronto were empty; there were no posters on them. So if you put up a poster about your band, people would stop and look at them because it was something that was really different. So around the time the Crash 'n' Burn was rolling, we were walking down Duncan Street one day and we saw a poster for the Curse. This was a new band; it was a *women's* band. Paul was always the guy to get right on to anything new; Paul [Robinson] and Ralph [Alfonso] must have gotten in touch with them and booked them for the Crash 'n' Burn.

Julia Bourque: The Diodes had that space for the whole summer. The Liberal Party was a major tenant there so it was quite a scandal. It was a great space, though. It was wonderful because it was so dead; the whole area was totally dead. It was just business, there was nothing else down there. On a Friday and Saturday this place opened up and it was just wall-to-wall people, which would have meant about two hundred people. They got it together and filled bathtubs full of beer. It was a booze can; it was great. It was so much fun. It was better than a high school dance.

Did you ever go to camp? You know how close you get with all those people you just met a week ago? It was like that: It was like summer camp, and everybody was your new best friend. I'd never seen anything like it. I was at York University at the time and I'd never seen such freaks in all my life.

Anna Bourque: It was fabulous and terrifying – *terrifying*. I'd picked up the bass three weeks before, I didn't know how to play. I had a book with me that I put on the stage floor that had drawings of the neck and where to put my fingers for each song.

Julia Bourque: We had practiced in Mickey's mother's basement on Major Street for three weeks. We wrote about ten songs.

Anna Bourque: It was pretty scary. I seem to recall I had nine Newcastle Browns that night and I wasn't anywhere near down to sane. It's an incredible thing to do. Oh, and the sound was terrible, *we* were terrible, and we threw food at the audience. I think the first night we threw birthday cake because it was Linda's birthday, which was kind of fantastic. Because when you're holding a cake in front of an audience, you know what they do? They move like waves. As you sort of aimed the cake they would move away. That's what made it so musical. Ha ha ha.

Patzy Poison, Ruby T's, the Curse photo by Gail Bryck

Mickey Skin: It felt very natural. We were maybe a little bit nervous, but not that much. We were doing it so much in tongue-in-cheek and in fun that I don't think we were thinking of it as, "Oh wow, we're in show biz." It was just, "All right, this is a big party and we're the leaders of it." And that's kind of how it always was.

"Punk Rock: Toronto's Nasties Create a Style That Goes Beyond Mere Posturing," by Peter Goddard [*Toronto Star,* July, 1977]: "Six weeks ago the city's first, and so far only, all-female punk band played its first gig. The moment the Curse was onstage they started to tell the men what they thought of them — and it wasn't all that nice."

Nora Currie: Meeting the Curse, watching the Curse play — I'm a feminist and I was at that time, and it certainly wasn't a popular word or place to be at that time. So for me, it was very exciting to see women so sensual in music. In writing it, playing it, and telling men to go fuck themselves in a political and productive forum. That, to me, was the thing that drew me the most to them.

Gail Manning: I think we all had a wonderful, marvelous sense of self, that as women we could do whatever we wanted and certainly didn't want to get put down by anybody. We were as good as the boys. They were extraordinarily entertaining. Mickey was just a great, great front person. She was really, really funny. Jula and Anna were a solid guitar and bass player.

It was just pure entertainment. I can't say to you that it was the greatest music in retrospect that I ever heard, but at the time it captured what a girl punk band was all about. Today would they stand the test of time? I can't say that. But at the time they were just great fun.

Nora Currie: I loved their music. They were not accomplished musicians and that wasn't really necessary in punk; it was kind of one-chord music. It was more about performance, which is an essential part of music and the songs and the lyrics and the message. They were feminists in all that true and positive meaning about reclaiming space and asserting the female identity and agency and sexuality.

That was a massive shift, so it was very fulfilling. They were *just* as capable of smashing things or getting into a fight. They would throw assholes off the stage.

Johnny Garbagecan actually got his name because the first time

the curse. mickey skin. photo ralph alfonso

they played, he was so offended as a guy—first of all who was already in a music scene—that these women would get up and dare to do that.

Zoltan Lugosi: I had to have an alias because I was wanted by the police. I couldn't use my name; my name sticks out like a sore thumb. So I threw a garbage can at the Curse. They were playing at the Crash 'n' Burn and there was a garbage can that they put ice and beer in. I threw one at them at the stage and I guess it stuck. They were terrible. The Curse couldn't even play. They just used to make noise.

Pop Music Beat, by Gerald Levitch [*Toronto Sun*, June, 1977]: "Mostly, they perform as if they'd never seen their instruments before."

Nora Currie: They *couldn't* play. But they had an energy and a presence that was so strong and so powerful that their ability to play really well didn't matter; it became part of their performance and their charm and their energy and why we went to see them.

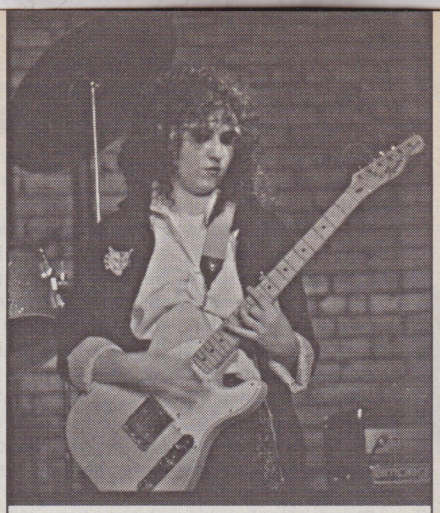
Anyway, Johnny was so offended at the Crash 'n' Burn he threw a garbage can onto the stage. So he was called Johnny Garbagecan as a result, but he became one of the biggest fans of the Curse and was intimately and otherwise involved with them. It sounds so negative, that he threw a garbage can onto the stage.

It's kind of a good example of how punk can inherently be seen as violent. There was an outlaw element to punk and it drew a lot of people from different places, including the criminal element.

Caroline Azar: The Curse were outstanding performers and shock rockers.

Julia Bourque: It was a real train wreck. Total confusion train wreck kind of describes our gigs. And Mickey was so wild. She'd dress up in tutus and throw food at the audience.

Gail Manning (mgr), Steven Davey (Dishes), Ruby T's, Patsy Poison photo: Gail Bryck



Jula Bourque, the curse
photo ralph alfonso

Mickey Skin: I don't know how the food came about. I think we did it from the first time. Everything was basically, "How can we have the most fun? How can we taunt the audience and get them going?" Then we started getting creative. I think at first we had whipped cream, and we did hot dogs, and then Jula started coming up with, "Oh! Let's cook a big pot of spaghetti and we'll throw *that*."

It was just, "What's the cheapest food we can cook and throw?" We thought spaghetti was good because it was gooey and sticky and made a big mess.

Jeff Ostofsky: I was working for a rock 'n' roll band. In 1976 the bar scene, the music scene in Toronto was radically different than it would be eight months later. So we're talking about an era that was post-hippie and pre-AIDS, thank God. I thank God every day for how lucky I got to be to not have had to wrap myself in a rubber tire to meet people.

The first band that I worked for before I became a roadie to most of the punk bands was called Hott Roxx, which was a Stones copy band. At the time we would play a week in a bar or three one-nighters. The thing was, we were working constantly doing a circuit in Ontario and at the time we were one of the highest paid bar bands in Ontario. We made about thirty-five hundred dollars a week. But that money went to the massive expense of carting around huge lighting and sound systems and a road crew. It was the more is more theory.

So that's what I was doing, only because my best friend was the guitar player. When the band got to the point of needing roadies but couldn't really afford them, the guitar player got his two best friends to do sound and lighting and we both evolved into becoming professionals.

In any case, it was the height of disco and playing Rolling Stones music was just great for people who hated disco. There was a big hook. We exploited that. So I was doing this gig and having the time of my life. I was eighteen, nineteen or whatever and living the cliché life. It's funny – the bigger the bands get, the less partying and sex you get because you're way too busy and you're way too tired and you're on an airplane. But when you're a band from Toronto and you pull into some little shit fuck town in Northern Ontario, you're immediately identifiable as *different*. So that was way more fun; that was like being a rock star in your own neighborhood.

As I remember it, in the spring of '77 our band went on a tour which took three months. It took us from here to Vancouver and back. We came back in early summer of that year and I look at a newspaper. Someone picked it up and said, "Look at this, man. *Nazi Dog*? What's that?" It was on the front page of the *Star*. I grabbed the paper and went, "That's not a dog, that's Steve for God's sake!"

I had met him when we were kids, like thirteen-ish, and even then he was one of the funniest and smartest, but different, guys I knew at that point in my life. I loved the guy … but *this*? I had barely heard of the Ramones let alone cutting yourself onstage and using the word "Nazi."

The funny thing is, the last time I saw him before that front page was a few years previous. I ran into him on the street and he was Lou Reed. And then I met him a year or so later and he was David Bowie. Then I didn't see him for all that time and he was Nazi Dog. So right away I discover that one of my very best friends in life, Anna Bourque, is in the Curse. I said, "Anna, you've never played an instrument in your life. What do you mean I go away for three months and I come back and you're a punk star?" The punk movement was really a whirlwind; like, wow, a lot to absorb in a short period.

Anna Bourque: Those first two shows were fantastic in the way that we were truly horrible. I think you can blame me for most of the badness of our band because I just never got it. I'm just so not musical. I played the viola in junior high school but I just never got it. Everything I did was just by memory, so I never felt that I ever did a good gig because I never felt like I knew what I was doing. Really, that three weeks between getting the gig and playing was this major education of becoming part of it: The school of becoming a punk band in Toronto.

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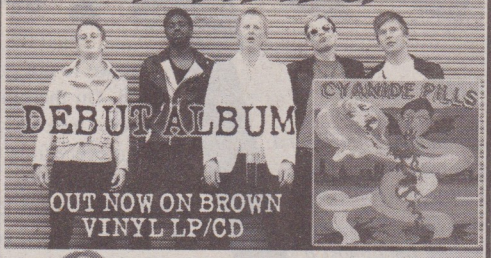

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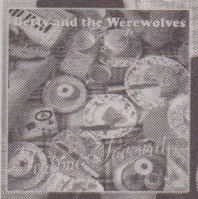

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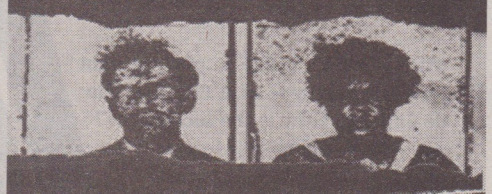

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OS ESTUDANTES

Rio de Janeiro is internationally known for their beaches, girls and beautiful spots. It's also known for its music like bossa nova and samba. There's even a strong pop punk scene with good looking guys and their emo style haircuts. On the other side of town, old school punk band Os Estudantes (the Students) have been playing for almost a decade with songs about anger, fear and anguish. Here's the Rio de Janeiro that you never heard about.

This interview was originally made for Brazilian fanzine Canibal Vegetariano, *and was translated by Raphael Erichsen and Manfrini.*
Photos by Mateus Mondini

MRR: Let's start by introducing the band...
Vitão: I'm the singer. I think I listen to music that is very similar to what we play with Estudantes, which is old school hardcore punk. I listen to other kinds of stuff as well. Jazz, rap or metal. If it's good music I'm into it.
Manfrini: I play the guitar and I love hardcore punk from the early '80s!
Diogo: Drums. I listen to basically the same stuff as Vitão, mainly the sub-genres up to 2003. Since then I listened to a lot of new stuff, besides old stuff that I still didn't know. To create Estudantes' tunes I think I accidentally got an Iron Maiden influence, but with some crazy tempos and a smaller drum kit.
Donny: I play the distortion bass. I've been in the band for a year now. I used to be an Os Estudantes fan and used to hang out at their shows, lol. One day they call me up to join the band and I was up for it. I like listening to everything from Black Flag, Flipper and Bad Brains to Cramps, Sonics and Link Wray... Black Sabbath, MC5, Melvins...I don't know, loads of crap.

MRR: What's it like to play straight forward hardcore in a city like Rio de Janeiro. How is the local scene? Are there many punk places to play?
Dony: It's like eating banana with ginger and pi at the swan.
Manfrini: You know, we are always complaining about Rio, but when we are playing we have a lot of fun. If it weren't like this we wouldn't still be playing today.
Vitão: It's complicated. There are some cool places to play in the city like Audio Rebel and Planet Music. Sometimes so-called "rock clubs" ask us to play.
Diogo: Nobody goes to our gigs here in Rio, we're not popular here. Even our friends don't show up anymore. On the other hand, our concerts in the suburbs are always wicked. One crazy thing about our gigs in Rio—this is the city of the sun but every time we play you can be sure that it is raining.

MRR: Two recent Estudantes' gigs in São Paulo made a lot of noise with the hardcore community. Mainly because of the energy and rage that you guys put on stage. Where does this mix of passion and anger that you put in your music come from?
Dony: We love playing outside Rio. It's always different from here. 99% of our gigs in Rio suck. Because it's almost always happening at the same club and that's kind of boring. So, it's really natural. When we are touring you have all the adrenalin that comes with it. The thing gets hot as we speak here. Where this anger comes from? For sure it's from this bloody hell weather here. You can tell if you come here in the summer. We have 42

Celsius degrees with a 60 Celsius degree feeling. Fuck, it's like your brain is melting. Where I live there is no girl form Ipanema, no beaches, no beautiful spots, just the bloody sun.

Vitão: I live near a cemetery. It's not that bad, it's a very quiet neighborhood. We are not a professional band though, there are good gigs and there are awful gigs as well. There are some gigs that the crowd goes crazy with us and there are some that just suck. Nothing is planned. About the anger... We live in Rio, that's enough for us. But, anyway, respect our city—we are the only ones allowed to spit on it, lol.

Diogo: We have a new tune that asks your answer but what I see is that I have to work too hard to pay my bills in a fucking poor country. The public transport sucks, and I don't even have a car to get stuck in traffic. Somebody should tell me the exact date of the end of the world so I can quit my job and keep playing and drinking and just wait for the end. I think the passion when we play is something that we grew up with. Some people lose this passion with time but I think in our case it's getting stronger. Adult life makes me look for and retrieve the good feelings I had when I was younger, when life was a party, and I used to do everything with soul. Playing music is awesome, and I always think about it when I'm on the stage.

Manfrini: We put our hearts on stage. It doesn't make sense if it's not like this. I think it's not like we are acting. Music is art and human expression and on stage is where you have to put all this energy, all the feelings, the anger...it's what keeps us alive as a band, and as human beings too.

MRR: You have been playing together since 2000. You put out a split CD with the Evil Idols back in 2001 and then there was this long wait up to the first full-length. Why so long?

Vitão: Well, we are kind of lazy as you can tell. We are not very professional but I can tell you that the bass players we had were even worst.

Manfrini: There was not *one* reason, but loads of them. On the first hand, we had so many different bass players, and we used to study and work back then. I think we drank too much as well. We had the band as a hobby, and we used to play five gigs a year, write three new songs, and it was OK for us. But then we got this cool line up—everybody connected and we played with our hearts, so we thought it was time to record again. We were playing really good songs, so we felt we just had to record it!

Diogo: I always mess up with work projects, and I also have been wasted too many times in my life with late night hangs, girls, and alcohol... All this kind of crap, hehe.

MRR: You released the first full-length on vinyl. Why?

Vitão: We didn't have much money at that time and it's really expensive to press vinyl here in Brazil. We took all the money we could and all we could afford was 100 records. Somehow it sold out very fast and then Laja Records released it on CD. Nobody cares about CDs anymore.

Manfrini: We got the idea and everybody told us it was a stupid idea. I don't know; it was something we really wanted to do even though we didn't have much money. Of course we could make way more money if we put it out on CD. You pay the same price for 1000 CDs as 100 vinyl records. Nowadays CDs are so disposable and it is so impressive how these 100 records travelled around the world and made so much noise. It's crazy that a band that hasn't released anything in the last seven years, because of 100 records, can connect with people that like and produce the same kind of music. It's fantastic!

Diogo: All the time people ask me if a still have a copy, but I'm saving an extra copy to sell on eBay, in case someone in the band dies before me!

MRR: How do you view the current music industry. I mean, nobody cares about CDs anymore. You can find whatever you want on the internet for free! And now everyone is looking for vinyl records…

Manfrini: I think what really matters is that we spread our music and make people listen to what we are playing. Personally, I like to buy vinyl, and I think it's the best way to listen music. Vinyl is not as disposable as CDs or MP3s. There is a ritual—to put a record on a record player, the big sleeve, you know what I mean? But the internet is cool as well. It's amazing to hear about really obscure bands from all over the world.

Vitão: I just buy vinyl records. I think the problem of listening to music on the computer is that the sound is usually pretty lame. Crappy headphones, crappy speakers… People work hard in the studio and then the sound you hear at home is total crap.

Diogo: Our tunes are kind of dark and ugly—I they are the perfect match for vinyl. Especially if your sound system is old like mine. CDs are still a way better format than MP3s but they are still kind of disposable. I don't give a shit how the music industry is, but I am glad to see that some of the Brazilian independents labels like Laja and Pecúlio are still around with all this industry crisis.

MRR: What do you think has gotten better and what has become worse in the hardcore punk scene since you guys started?

Dony: What is better is that the scene is getting worse and worse, and that's great! In ten years there won't be any good bands; it will be the end!

Vitão: Humm... Internet access makes everything easier now. It's easier to contact people and other bands, especially abroad. What's really the worst are bands that have awful style and ridiculous music.

Manfrini: The pictures are better, there are awesome photographers now! All the rest is the same crap, maybe a little bit different, but still the same shit. Actually, I can say that crap is good. Otherwise, we wouldn't be able to complain and wonder how great it would be to have a punk rock band outside this fucking town, for example in places like San Francisco or Umea, hehe.

Diogo: This kind of mix of hardcore and Brazilian romantic country music is not cool, definitely. The internet is really cool but I think the biggest thing to happen in the scene is the bigger presence of girls. I think this is the most powerful thing that happened in the scene in the last two decades.

MRR: What's the plan from now on?

Vitão: We are recording new tracks right now. We are also releasing two records. We have five tracks on a five-way split with four other great Brazilian bands (the Renegades of Punk, Ornitorrincos, Homem Elefante, and Velho de Cancer). A Brazilian label is releasing the split on CD in the next couple months. We also have a 7" with five other tracks that was just released by the American label Todo Destruído.

Dony: Maybe we could make a porn. Like us four getting laid together. We are thinking about hiring a Brazilian folk musician to add a little bit of South American style to the band, lol!

Diogo: I'm trying to find sometime to cut some video stuff for the band.

Manfrini: We are still trying to schedule our first European tour and we are waiting for the release of these two new records. We want to play as much as we can.

MRR: Any last words?

Dony: Cheers!

Vitão: Dracula!

Diogo: Invite us to play in your town—we love to meet new places and people. We are just a little bit too old to sleep at the floor. Give us a couch, please!

Manfrini: Feeling angry is good for your health.

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Akemarropa: Esclavo De Lo Que Ves 7"

Anfo: Ayacucho CD Latin Edition

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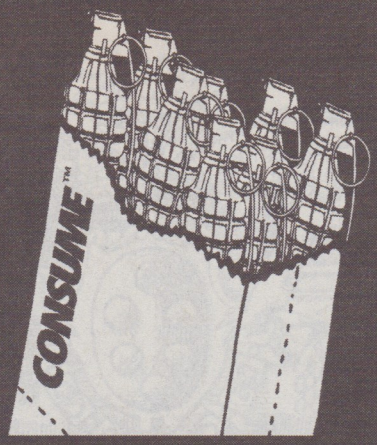

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INTERVIEW AND POLAROIDS BY BECK LEVY.

MRR: WHAT WAS THOU LIKE BEFORE BRYAN TOOK IT OVER? ARE YOU GOING TO KICK BRYAN OUT SOON SO THAT MATTHEW CAN SING AGAIN? MATTHEW, ARE YOU MAD AT BRYAN FOR REPLACING YOUR CROONING WITH HARSH, MANIAC SCREAMING? MATTHEW, WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS SO TIRED?

Andy: What was Thou like before Bryan? One word: fun. Also, we were all still friends back then. Now practice is more like toiling away in a labor camp on a hot Sunday morning. Sometimes he doesn't even show up. He just calls in sick from his palace on Panola Street and spends the rest of the Sabbath alphabetically organizing his miniature figurine collection. I cannot speak of the coup to overthrow his regime at this time.

Matthew is asleep. I'll see if I can wake him for comment.

Bryan: I don't think Matthew is too beat up about giving up the vocals to me. Now he can focus on his true craft. And he can always gloat over the online reviews of folks pining for the singing to be more Dax Riggs and less Dan Weyandt.

I think the only big difference in the band before I joined was that there was a little less direction and a lot less overt social commentary in the lyrics. Aside from that, the work ethic was already in place. These guys had been plugging away for a couple of years, had recorded some demos, had all but the vocals to Tyrant written and recorded, and had been playing plenty of shows. And, you know, Andy always tells people that I was the one who got them touring, but really he was the one who shanghaied the We Need To Talk tour. Technically, he was trying to get Thou onto that tour before I had joined, and getting me in the band was more of an afterthought for those guys: "Oh, yeah, and we'll try you out on vocals, and if that works, you can sing with us on tour."

I might have had something to do with the artwork moving more towards 16th century woodcuts and into textless obscurity; and the fact that we play so many more house shows and independent spaces these days. Not that we're snobs about playing bars or clubs or whatever—although our summer tour to the United Kingdom and Ireland makes me want to be-—but we like to think that we're at least making an attempt not to preclude people based on age who might want to come out and see us. I mean, that was the big factor in us compromising as a band with the MySpace—that we would just use it as a tool to get our music out to more people rather than revel in any sort of cultish elitism or abuse it as a social forum or online popularity contest.

MRR: WHAT OTHER BANDS ARE YOU ALL IN OR HAVE YOU BEEN IN OR ARE YOU CURRENTLY IN?

Andy: Matthew and Terry are in Barghest with a young, misanthropic necromancer named J. Several amateur music commentators have explained their stylings as "USBM"—whatever that means. Mitch and Josh were playing in a band with two other male models called Man Plus Building. They play easy-listening post-rock that our grandmothers would probably take a shine to. That band has basically morphed into something a little edgier called Baby Boy, which I'm also in. Mitch and Josh are also in a "punk" band called Nasal, an indie rock band called These Children, and a Prince cover band. I dissolved all of my other projects so that you and I could start a band, Beck. Bryan occasionally lends his lungs to a group of vivisectors and lawyers and doctors who are stuck in the past trying to keep aflame the ever-dimming light of '90s hardcore. What is it with these old guys? I think he and Derek (Thou's permanent roadie and keeper of reality) are scheming something as well.

Bryan: The band with Derek—Divine Hammer—hinges on him dumpstering a half stack, amp, guitar, and a solid drummer with working drumset. Any leads, Crimethinc International? Please send them our way. Chopsley—the elder band of ancients hewn from the hallways of southern ivory towers—is all but defunct these days. The rest of the professionals are too busy with their "careers" and Saturday night UFC. Supposedly, members of Thou are or have been a part of Rhinosour, Sugar Cookies, Dwayne Wayne, and Eat a Bag of Dicks. But I wouldn't know anything about that. There are probably a few screamo and prog rock bands we were parts of, but I won't mention any names.

MRR: WHAT IS LIVING IN BATON ROUGE LIKE? WHEN BATON ROUGE BECOMES A CLASSLESS SOCIETY, WILL THE MASSES LOOK TO THOU FOR GUIDANCE?

Andy: You come home after a long day at work dealing with spoiled rich people only to find three men in their mid-forties drinking Bud Light in your parking lot and yelling something about football at the top of their lungs. This is after spending an hour in traffic trying to drive towards campus. They yell something insulting about your clothes or what they assume is your sexual orientation as you limp towards your slumlord-owned and roach-infested apartment. The walls are shaking on account of the DJ at the restaurant next door, who's spinning all of your least favorite songs to a crowd of visor-adorned frat boys and their vapid counterparts.

After staring blankly at the wall, you decide you've had enough and ride your bike downtown. On the road, people yell at you to "ride on the sidewalk, ASSHOLE!" and again yell something insulting about what they assume is your sexual orientation. After knocking back enough whiskey and/or apple juice to calm your nerves, you risk life and limb once again on the bike ride back to the decaying pit where your bedroom awaits you. Fall asleep, repeat.

Baton Rouge has crimes against excitement to answer for, and when it goes classless, the people will *have* to look to Thou for guidance. We will have replaced the current infrastructure with our own brand of fascism.

Mitch: Baton Rouge is just a city. Like any other city, it can really suck or it can be a really great place; it's what you make of it. Not everyone in Thou shares the same feelings about Baton Rouge. I work two jobs that I really like and at the end of the day go home to an apartment that I also really like. There is almost always something fun to do it you know where to look. From MST3K Mondays at the Moon to house shows or helping your friends host the local college radio station. I hate hearing about people hating on their towns because there is nothing to do. Every town has buildings to climb and people to meet and fun to be found. You just have to look in the right places.

Bryan: I've never lived in Baton Rouge, but I did put on shows there off and on from 2001 until 2008, so I'm pretty familiar with the people who have been coming out for music over the last several years. I think the truth of it lies somewhere in between what Andy and Mitch are saying; it's a little bit country and a little bit rock 'n' roll.

We actually just put out this EP on Robotic Empire that has two songs on it about Baton Rouge. Originally, Andy and I were each going to write one—his celebrating the more positive aspects of the town and mine being the required blast of misanthropic jibber jabber. Oddly enough, when we went to write these songs, it was right around when I had gotten fed up with some of the more unsavory showgoers in Baton Rouge who were significantly adding to my stress levels when doing house shows up there. I decided that I was going to just focus on New Orleans shows, and Andy said he would pick up the slack on the Baton Rouge shows if I wanted to send bands his way. I think most people in a leadership or organizational position tend to begin noticing more and more flaws in the people and places around them, and punk rock is really no exception to that notion. When you're trying to do a show at someone's house and not attract any undue attention, very quickly it can become tiresome dealing with drunks who don't want to pay for the show, people breaking furniture in the driveway, people shooting firecrackers in the street, people pissing on the neighbor's lawn, etc. So with Andy having to deal with all of this drama, his song ended up being less a glorification of Baton Rouge and more of a wistful, melancholic ode to wasted potential, while my song was the usual fare of blood boiling, finger pointing condemnations of everyone and everything around me.

That being said, I think Mitch really hits on the reality of the situation: Even though Andy and I deal with a lot of negativity within the realm of setting up shows for bands and finding and maintaining sustainable all ages spaces, which also tends to open our eyes to—or cloud them with—negative aspects of people in our everyday lives, there's also a lot of great stuff going on and wonderful people doing really creative things outside of punk shows. You just have to be willing to put in the time and energy to find them.

MRR: ONCE, IN NEW YORK CITY, I WATCHED AS YOU WERE ACCOSTED BY A DRUNK POLISH WOMAN, MARTA, WHO WAS VERY SORRY FOR YOU FOR BEING FROM NEW ORLEANS. WHAT ATTITUDES ABOUT YOUR HOMETOWNS DO YOU ENCOUNTER ON TOUR? DO YOU FIND YOURSELVES BEING ASKED ABOUT KATRINA A LOT? WHAT ABOUT PREJUDICE AGAINST THE SOUTH?

Andy: Ah, Marta, a nice young lady. People seem to be shocked that we don't have thick Southern drawls and just about everyone we've met have never heard of Baton Rouge. I suppose most people picture Louisiana as the city of New Orleans surrounded by a lawless swamp inhabited by bug-eating, croc-riding, shotgun-wielding hicks. Which is, of course, a dead-on analysis. They ask about Katrina a lot, yeah. I don't think a lot of people realize that we get hurricanes almost every year. Most people don't seem to know about Gustav, which destroyed a bunch of homes here in Baton Rouge last year, or realize that Katrina affected the whole Gulf Coast, especially Southern Mississippi.

Since we try to stay with as many open-minded and tolerant people as possible while on the road, we don't encounter too much prejudice. And a lot of times people's speculations about the South are true, especially concerning racism. It's not like we have a strong Klan presence in our town or anything like that, but racism is still ingrained in a lot of people's families down here, especially in smaller towns.

Bryan: I feel like we get fewer questions about Katrina than we do Eyehategod or Phil Anselmo. I wish people realized that for people without a lot of money, things down here aren't much better than they were right after the storm. There are still tons of folks stranded in other states, our devastating crime rate has only gone up, the pre-Katrina corruption in the local government is disgustingly more glaring. And let's not even get started on the ultra-violent, crooked NOPD or the depressingly laughable "school system." And now things are getting all oily. This is a just a really crazy, backwards place to live in some times.

And not that the infamous Eyehategod or the insightful Mr. Anselmo don't deserve their legions of devotees, but there are a ton of amazing bands from New Orleans that get overlooked. In the twelve or thirteen years that I've been involved in punk, that seems like it's always been the case.

MRR: WHAT ARE YOUR SONGS ABOUT? IS THOU A POLITICAL BAND? A STRAIGHT-EDGE BAND? A VEGAN BAND?

Andy: Thou is all of those things and none of those things. We are a band of contradictions. What other band could have a song about animal rights while three fifths of the band are carnivores? Or songs about industrial collapse and the farce of voting while harboring a member who claims to be completely uninterested in politics? Does our sworn blood oath to the CEOs and marketing reps of Scion negate all of our socio-political commentary? Did we really participate in a ceremony wherein we were made to be branded with the car company's logo on our hides while the Southern Lord staff watched on from their gilded thrones in Los Angeles? Is S.C.I.O.N. merely a facade for the impending Illuminati New World Order?

Bryan: If anything, Thou is an experiment in working anarchism with a bunch of people who don't necessarily identify as anarchists. We're five individuals who don't usually all have the same approaches to life or agree with each others' reflections on and interactions with society, but we all maintain a loving relationship where we can voice our most extreme opinions and emotions in the context of art without judgment or censure.

You have to understand: An idea we express in a single song is just one very extreme, usually very one-sided and emotional response to an issue. For instance, "Smoke Pigs" certainly does not encompass the entirety of how any one us feels about issues of authority abuse or police culture, just as a song like "Here I Stand Head In Hand" doesn't look at every aspect of taking one's life into their own hands. Even with the relatively lengthiness of our music, ten minutes isn't really enough time for me to articulate my every thought and feeling on an issue, which is probably why we have songs that may even seem to contradict one another when set side by side for comparison.

MRR: WHY DO YOU PRINT MUCH OF YOUR MEMORABILIA WITHOUT THE THOU LOGO?

Andy: We went a little crazy with it when our friend Guzzie first designed it. We put it on everything: shirts, records, stickers, pins, our own bodies. We still use it a lot, but the anonymity of a logo-less record is also very appealing to us. Whenever some young hardcore kid browses past the indecipherable black metal logos and gory death metal imagery that is so ubiquitous at the local record shop, we hope that the logo-less, cave scrawlings that grace our album cover entices she or he to suffer a bewildered conniption fit and BUY, BUY, BUY.

Bryan: We don't just use random artwork willy nilly as a placeholder or interesting background for us to slap a logo and some text over. The pictures we include are there to set the mood of the record, to reinforce whatever themes we're trying to get across. So, really, the artwork shouldn't be obscured by text that could just as easily be somewhere else. It's just silly to adhere to the idea that your band logo "has to be on the cover" when anyone with half a brain, can look at the spine or the back or whatever and figure out what the record is. When did punk rock become about holding people's hands, anyway? People need to work a little.

There is a violence that liberates, and a violence that enslaves.
There is a violence that is moral and a violence that is immoral.

MRR: IN THE EXQUISITELY PACKAGED MALFEASANCE RETRIBUTION 10", YOU QUOTE MUSSOLINI ("THERE IS A VIOLENCE THAT LIBERATES, AND A VIOLENCE THAT ENSLAVES; THERE IS A VIOLENCE THAT IS MORAL AND A VIOLENCE THAT IS IMMORAL") IN THE ART. WHY? DOES YOUR USE OF THE QUOTATION CHANGE THE MEANING?

Andy: Context is everything. We used that quote to make people think about the way pacifism is sold to us in our daily lives, to think about where the breaking point lies and when violence becomes necessary.

Bryan: Yeah, and detournement is everything. Taking things out of their original context and applying them to new ideas in a way that completely changes their meaning. This is what I love about writing lyrics or including quotes and commentary in our liner notes.

But to answer your question, YES! Of course we're changing the meaning. Despite the inclusion of several obscured quotations from various 1940s dictators in our first couple of records, we are by no means fascists or supporters of any sort of totalitarian governments (or any governments at all, for that matter). But lifting a phrase here and there and applying it to radical conventions—there's a lot of leeway in the different themes and comparisons that can be made. In the instance that you bring up where we threw a Mussolini quote above a group of women, there was an obvious play on using violence as a sort of ethical retribution. In terms of the A-side track it was about all out revolution, a Randian firestorm that could purge the world of its overbearing politics and crippling social conditioning. In terms of the B-side track, it was obviously meant as using violence against rapists and other abusers, a sort of liberating and empowering tool for victims and their allies that was morally just.

MRR: WHAT ROLE CAN MUSIC PLAY IN RESISTANCE CULTURE?

Andy: A mere gateway to radicalization. Or it's just background music.

Bryan: What did Refused say? "Revolution with a catchy phrase." Yeah, not much beyond the point of getting an individual into politics. I probably started off like a lot of kids getting into politics through a mainstream band like Rage Against the Machine which of course lead me to bands like Inside Out and the ultra militance of Earth Crisis. And eventually I fell into the more grandiose and romantic Crimethinc stuff like Catharsis and Zegota. All of that music set the path to a lot of my current ideas about radical politics, but I'm not sure how much influence it has on me these days. If anything, a lot of newer music just rings hollow to me, a lot of posturing and rhetoric and not a lot of action to follow it up. At least bands like From the Depths and Gather and Seven Generations actually have members who—for all their faults—are actively trying to make the world a better place outside of some controversial lyrics. So if anything, it's been the pro-active individuals in punk rock who have had an influence on me in these later years.

MRR: HOW CAN MUSIC TRANSFORM SCENES AND COMMUNITIES?

Andy: If punk changed anything, it would be illegal. Wait...

photo by richard gaccione

MRR: I CAN'T HELP BUT MENTION HOW PROLIFIC YOU HAVE BEEN IN YOUR TIME AS A BAND. HOW MANY RELEASES AND SHOWS TOTAL? HOW MANY TOURS?

Andy: I think we have more than twenty releases if you include the same songs being released on different formats (CD, vinyl, tape). As for shows, we're at 186 at the moment (Bryan keeps a list. Seriously), but that's not including the shows we played before Bryan joined the band. The total is probably well over 200 if you include that. Tour-wise, we did a week and a half East Coast tour with my other band, We Need to Talk, three weeks on the West Coast, six weeks cross-country, another week on the East Coast, and two weeks overseas--so, five? That's not counting the mini-tours we've done.

Bryan: Yeah, it's more like thirteen releases if you don't count each weirdo format or repress as a separate release: a demo, two full lengths, six splits, three EPs, and a compilation. And I think there were one or two demos before I joined the band. Some of those weekend warrior mini-tours had some brutal drives. Maybe we should count those. We did two out of town shows with Nanda Devi, and the drives were just stupid. Fourteen hours to Fayetteville? And then another eight or something to Nashville, and then eight to get home for the next morning so I could make it to work? We're not very good businessmen. Or maybe I'm just bad at routing tours? We also just did a couple of brutal tours with our new drummer Josh Nee. The first one was eight shows in five days up in the northeast. And the second—which we thought would be easier—was even more brutal with five shows in three days just in Florida. We just haven't been getting out as much, so we've had to pack it in when we can. The West Coast tour this summer was supposed to have a pile of two-fers, though some of those have dropped off with venues closing, people flaking, etc.

MRR: IN ANOTHER INTERVIEW, BRYAN, YOU EXPLAIN WHY OTHER BANDS ARE RARELY AS ACTIVE OR PROLIFIC AS YOU'VE BEEN: "LAZINESS AND MEDIOCRITY." ARE LAZINESS AND MEDIOCRITY PART OF THE PUNK ETHIC?

Bryan: Ha. That sounds pretty bad when you put it like that. I certainly don't mean to put our band on a pedestal or pretend that we're not slackers a lot of times. I guess a big difference between us and some random band is that we've been really lucky to have all these labels we really like asking to put out records for us, and we've tried to take them up on as many as we thought we could. And when we go out on the road, there just seems to be a lot of really solid people around always making it a really enjoyable experience. For the most part, we haven't lost too much money going out on tour. And those great experiences have been driving forces for us to write more, practice more, tour more. We certainly would not have written, recorded, and released as much material as we have without all the support from our friends.

Some people would definitely have you believe that doing things half-assed is part of the punk ethic. I think there's just some confusion that being able to do something yourself means there shouldn't be any quality control. Doing something just to do it seems very haphazard and thoughtless to me. Every band with a MySpace goes on tour now, and wastes all of these communities' time and resources putting out records or inundating a city with generic shows, when they should

be spending more time in the practice room or investing their energy into strengthening their own communities. It feels like, for some people, DIY and punk has just become a sort of mantra for being lazy.

"Who cares!? It's punk! It's punk!" But when it's rubbish, when it's crap, it's not punk. It's punk to do something yourself and do it right. It's punk to add something to the conversation. It's not punk to be the monkey in the corner throwing your feces at the wall and calling it art.

For me, punk/DIY/whatever is about empowering yourself,and being able to take control, or realizing that certain things aren't beyond your control. I'm thirty years old, and I'm still engaged with this stuff because it's just become ingrained into how I do everything, how I approach doing any kind of work or tackling any problem. A blatant disregard for bureaucracy and naysayers, using the available resources to create something worthwhile, following through with what you say and how you feel, these are the real ethics of punk.

MRR: RIGHT, AND WE'LL BE HOLDING THE PUNK ROCK CONVENTION IN NOLA IN 2012 TO BREAK UP BANDS THAT SHOULD REALLY STOP NOW, AND REDISTRIBUTE THEIR GEAR. TALK ABOUT SOME OF YOUR RELEASES IS THERE A BORN AGAINST COVER? IS THOU A COVER BAND?

Andy: The Born Against cover ("Well Fed Fuck") is on this awesome four-volume comp by a great label called Blind Date. We're slowly morphing into a hardcore-grunge-metal cover band, which of course is a dream come true. We've recorded two Nirvana covers: "Sifting" which is on that Baton Rouge EP, and "Milk It" which is going to be on an In Utero tribute album. Robotic Empire is putting both of those out, so maybe it's Andy's fault that we're turning into a cover band. We also recorded four Black Sabbath songs for an EP that Vendetta put out a while back, a Minor Threat song ("Screaming at a Wall"), and an Agents of Oblivion song ("Paroled in '54"). We should really quit all this doom-metal foolishness and start doing wedding gigs. In total, there are about nine new releases on the way: EPs, splits, a full-length, and comps. And then a handful of represses on top of that.

Bryan: That Clone compilation that Marcel is doing on Blind Date is pretty epic. Four LPs in die-cut jackets with these very large, very nice booklets. He also did these limited wooden boxes to house all four records. And Glyn Scrawled has been doing all the artwork. He's a great guy from Ireland doing some really nice stuff. He actually drew and screened some incredible tour posters for the UK/ Ireland shows we did. The Moloch cover of Rorschach is unbeatable. They played it when we were in Liverpool. And the Salome cover of Fugazi on volume one is pretty intense! I'm probably the one who pushes the most for us to do more covers, and these guys have to reign me in a bit. If I had my way, we'd probably be doing more hardcore covers--and probably a show or two where we play "Bleach" from start to finish. We might end up doing a Massive Attack song though and maybe some Faeries covers. We wanted the Pygmy Lush split to have us covering each other's songs, but Mike Taylor poo pooed all over that, all over our hearts and dreams. There might be a split 12" in the future with Skagos where we cover each others' songs. And I'm still secretly plotting Pearl Jam and Fiona Apple cover EPs like the Sabbath one. And then there's the contract with Andy Low to include a Nirvana cover on every Robotic Empire release we do.

photo by ryan peterson

MRR: "TOUR IS A FOUR LETTER WORD." WHAT SUCKS ABOUT TOURING? WHAT RULES ABOUT IT?

Andy: What sucks about it is our endless hope that the 14-hour drive to the middle of nowhere will end at a giant house full of kids going crazy, an amazing all-day vegan BBQ, bands that blow our minds, and some really solid people helping to organize everything, so it runs smoothly. It lets us down all the time. The more realistic scenario is that we end up going back to some town that we originally had a not-so-great experience in, hoping for a different outcome, and having virtually the same not-so-great experience (Boise, I'm looking at you). What rules is when that hope pays off, and we end up with a solid contact in a city full of awesome kids. What also rules is when barely anyone shows up to a show in some town we've never been to, and even though there's five people there it's still an amazing experience because the people are into it and we end up hanging out all night. I will say, with regards to your town of residence, that we always have a really awesome time in DC.

Bryan: Jah, the Smiths references are endless. What sucks is dealing with promoters who have no real concept of how to do a show, no flyers, no working PA, a million bands on the bill, nowhere for us to stay, no food (waaah!), etc. Lackadaisical people in general, but I guess I heap a lot of the blame on the promoters, since it's sort of their job to wrangle everything together. Playing with too many bands can be a bummer, especially when most of them are really mediocre; you just tend to get burnt out after a while hearing the same stuff over and over and over and over again. Playing to people you can't relate to at all, that's no fun. We've had a couple of shows that were "really good" or even "awesome" where people had a really positive response, but at the end of the night, I would just sit down and brood and feel completely alienated from everyone. Maybe that's a personal issue?

MRR: I RELATE TO THAT!

Bryan: Nice things about touring... Meeting new people who are awesome, creative, and reliable is always great. And getting to see all our old friends, of course. And extending the long arm of New Orleans and Baton Rouge into these other cities and cultures.

MRR: I'VE SEEN YOU PLAY PLACES LIKE BASEMENTS AND ABC NO RIO, AND ALSO AT PLACES LIKE SCION FEST AND CLUBS WITH SUNN O))). WHILE THE BENEFITS TO BRINGING A DIY ETHIC TO MORE MAINSTREAM METAL SPACES IS MORE OBVIOUS (OR, MAYBE NOT), WHAT DO YOU BRING TO DIY FROM THOSE MORE MAINSTREAM EXPERIENCES?

Andy: We probably didn't bring as much DIY to those SUNN shows as we should have! Still, I think it's kind of summed up by what one review of that show said about us having patches for sale, which he hadn't seen at a show since like '98 or something. Is that guy out of touch or what? That, bringing zines to the shows, and being really flexible on pricing on our stuff was probably something your average mainstream metal dude isn't accustomed to seeing at shows, at least at a big venue like the Knitting Factory (and definitely in the places we played in Ireland and the UK, a lot of people there seemed shocked by our low, low prices). The whole experience of playing a big club definitely gave me a new appreciation for playing in a basement with a ton of people freaking out and sweating all over me. It's kind of complicated for me. I like when we play through a bunch of awesome gear with a huge P.A. backing us up, a guy behind the soundboard who knows his shit, and enough room for me to move around comfortably. I like sounding good, and sounding as heavy as we possibly can sound. That's something that's important to me as a person who appreciates music on an aesthetic level. The drawback to that scenario is the feeling of isolation on a stage, the blank stares of a ton of people in the crowd, and the way I lose my train of thought while I'm up there and I start thinking about how everyone back home is doing and whatnot. I don't like being able to see the guy in the back checking his cell phone, you know? It breaks the magic! When you're in the depths of the Girl Cave (a much beloved and now defunct DC house venue) and you've got people up in your face you feel like you can take on the world. When a crowd of people are yelling the words to an anti-cop anthem, you feel like if someone came and tried to shut the show down they would be met with serious opposition. That's fucking empowering! And not just for us, but for everyone. It's inclusion. That's the real turn-on about DIY shows.

Bryan: If I have it my way, we'll never play on a stage again. I hate it. It feels like I'm prostrating myself in front of a crowd that could just as easily be staring at a television as they are "experiencing" a punk show. Playing those kinds of shows usually puts me in a mood to become completely antagonistic towards the crowd or just completely introverted, shutting myself off from the audience. Either way, it comes down to a pretty alienating thirty minutes instead of the inclusive, cathartic release that I want. I don't know if we're bringing anything from the mainstream experience to the DIY realm, other than the knowledge of what we don't like! Or maybe there's something to be said about bringing the sometimes melodramatic "professionalism" of the mainstream to bear over the laziness inundating the DIY scene to some happy medium of quality punk rock? And everything Andy mentioned about bringing DIY to mainstream, some people get it and some people don't. Some people just assume that if you're selling your stuff at a reasonable price, there must be something wrong with it or it must be junk. They just don't understand the concept of keeping records and everything else affordable and accessible.

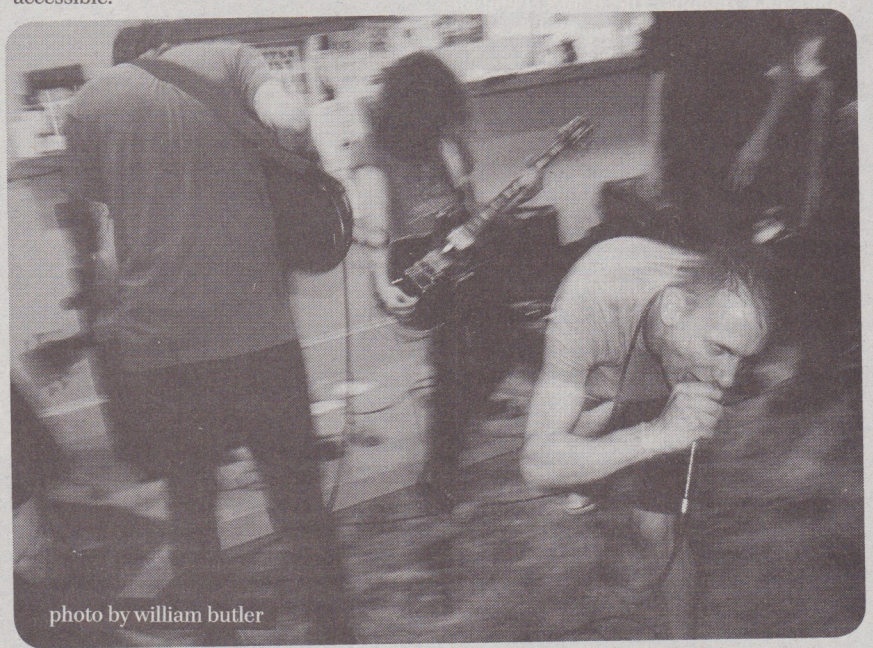

photo by william butler

MRR: WHAT DID YOU THINK OF SXSW?

Andy: I had a blast hanging out with friends and seeing Turboslut play everyday, but the whole dog-and-pony-show feel of the festival is kind of a joke to me. We played some good shows, though. And I got to hang out with Wino. I think a lot of bands take SXSW way too fucking seriously. They go there hoping to rub elbows with some hotshot A&R prick and score a deal, and that's just not the way the world works. The ridiculous advertising and ubiquitous media presence was annoying, too.

Bryan: Too much work for not enough return. Seeing Turboslut and Pygmy Lush and Thank God and Mirah was fun but other than the warehouse space we played on the last night, it wasn't a lot of fun to play. Actually, scratch that. The Snake Eyes show with From the Depths where we did a really short set was a blast! But overall, there was too much traffic and too many annoying jerkasses, and the shows were just too busy. It was just sensory overload, although I did appreciate the fact that nearly anyone with a couple feet of space threw some kind of DIY show. I really don't mean to be a baby about the whole thing. We had fun. A lot of friends from New Orleans and Baton Rouge came up, Adam Bartlett came out with us, and we got to see a lot of our pals from Virginia and DC. I even ran into Rusty from Dispensing of False Halos on the street. But the long drive out, the heat, the constant exhaustion, the constant marketing of everything everywhere you go, that stuff was kind of painful and certainly annoying. But I had a wonderful time writing our biography for the SXSW website. I had to break out the D20 and some old Salvatore novels and Richard Garlfield interviews for that one.

MRR: TALK ABOUT THE FRIENDS OF THOU MIXTAPES YOU MAKE. WHAT'S ON THEM? WHERE DO YOU SEND THEM? WHY?

Bryan: They're basically just CDR mixes that I do in runs of about 50. I've done two so far as a little extra thing to throw in folks' packages when they do mailorder with us, but anyone can download them off the mp3 blog I do (coffeeandcompany.blogspot.com), and I sort of give a run down of each band. Half the stuff on it is current bands who we're into and the other half is dead/forgotten/obscure bands that people should look into. They're a pretty good mix of metal, punk, and hardcore. We're about to record and then self release that To the Chaos Wizard Youth EP, so I'll probably have another one of these mixtapes in the works to go out with any mailorder stuff for that. Every now and then I do these CDR bootlegs too of old, out of print stuff or sometimes of current bands that I'm really into if I'm really trying to promote a show for them or something. You know, stuff like Earth Crisis, Gather, Madeline Adams, or Pygmy Lush.

MRR: CHANGING THE TOPIC BACK TO YOUR HOMETOWNS, WHAT ARE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS TO THE LOCAL SCENES

LIKE? WHAT ARE SOME LOCAL BANDS YOU'RE INTO?

Andy: I book shows here in Baton Rouge and go to as many awesome shows as I can, both here and in New Orleans. If I had time and money, there are plenty of bands I would like to help tour and release records. There are some good Baton Rouge bands: Melters, Panthalassa, Secret Annexe, Justinbailey, Wilderness Pangs. Our scene is pretty small, so everyone knows each other, we're all in bands together, we were in the same class in 3rd grade, etc. I'll let Bryan list the New Orleans bands. There are tons of good ones, but I'm definitely way into Why Are We Building Such a Big Ship?, Hurray for the Riff Raff, Haarp, Peiste, and Necro Hippies.

Baton RougeYAN: Yeah, everyone Andy's saying plus The Faeries, Small Bones, Opposable Thumbs, The Rooks, Pumpkin, Lovey Dovies, Caddywhompus, Black Belt, Tirefire, Mars, and Crackerboxxx. New Orleans is pretty kicking these days. I think Matthew and (former Thou drummer) Terry's other band Barghest is pretty much the best band in Baton Rouge. I'm looking forward to seeing Baby Boy and Giant Cloud. I'm expecting both of them to be pretty good. There are probably too many amazing local bands that have broken up to list. And beyond the scope of music, there are some great organizations down here: The Iron Rail Infoshop, Hot Iron Press, Books 2 Prisoners. And aside from the record section that I organize at the Iron Rail, Domino Sound Record Shack is pretty much the best record store in the city/world.

I used to book shows in Baton Rouge, but I started feeling like I was already coming up enough for Thou practice and Thou shows, and I also got sick of the drunken melodrama from the Baton Rouge scenesters. So now Andy has taken over those reigns as far as booking the bands I would normally be putting on shows for up there. I think the headaches and stress from that have given his hair its recent troll-like, lion's mane appearance. I'm still doing shows in New Orleans, forever and always. I was even doing shows in New Orleans during my post-Katrina exile to Oakland. It never ends. Also, interestingly enough, most people in Baton Rouge—despite my years of service to the city—thought that I never smiled or laughed. And a good armful were appalled at the fact that I had a girlfriend! I guess I have a reputation for being an "asshole" or a "cop" up there. But someone's got to put on the big boy pants and act like dad when all the little goofballs are lighting firecrackers in their dickholes on the front lawn during a show, or when they don't know how to keep the door shut while bands are playing.

MRR: HOW MUCH, AND WHAT, DO YOU FEEL YOU OWE TO DIY PUNK ROCK?

Andy: To me, punk rock is just logic. As a band, we do what makes the most sense and we try not to be pricks about it. To that end, we owe logic a lot.

Bryan: Absolutely nothing. What can you owe an ideology or a skills set? I'm still involved with things that are equated with punk rock because I'm still getting something out of that involvement: enjoyment, empowerment, interaction with inspiring people, etc. When I feel like I'm no longer getting anything out of it, that's when I'll stop putting into it. Even if you consider it in the way Andy mentions and just see punk as making a logical choice with how to react to a situation or interact with people. What can you possibly owe or give to logic?

photo by seth kramer

MRR: BRYAN, TELL ME ABOUT "AN IDEA LIKE NO OTHER." HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN BOOKING SHOWS? HOW DID YOU BECOME THE KIND OF GUY WHO BOOKS TOURS FOR LOCAL BANDS HE'S NOT EVEN IN AND DRIVES THEM AROUND THE COUNTRY?

Bryan: When I was 15 or so, some friends of mine were in a band called Head Pro. They played a couple of middle school fairs and eventually started playing shows at classic New Orleans spaces like the Faubourg Center and the Dixie Taverne. Going out to the those shows plus getting mixtapes from the drummer Steven Wiegand and another good friend Steven Springer, basically got me started on going to shows at these different places and tracking down all of these bands they were turning me on to. During my junior year of high school, I decided to try and use some of my school's resources to put on a matinee show with Head Pro and a bunch of these high school bands I had met. I did that my junior and senior year and also did a couple of all local shows at the Faubourg Center. My freshman year in college, I had gotten to the point where I was into a pretty good amount of underground music not from New Orleans. I started getting aggravated with local promoters who weren't advertising their shows very much or were charging too much or were having the shows at 18 and 21+ bars. It also felt like a lot of the bands I wanted to see just weren't coming down here. So I started writing bands letters asking them to come down, telling them that I would set up a show. Soon after, I got my first email account, adding my info to BYOFL, and I found some old website that had links for a million hardcore bands and started emailing away. Eventually, Adam Goren got in touch with me about doing an Atom and His Package show in New Orleans. This was November 1998. I threw that show at an awesome space called Movie Pitchers, which would become a staple for all ages shows in mid-city New Orleans for a few years.

That pretty much got the ball rolling for me to start doing shows full time. I guess I've been doing it for about 12 or 13 years now. At one point I was doing five or six shows a week. I think the longest break between shows I've had since that first Movie Pitchers show was the six months between the last show I did before Katrina and the first post-Katrina show I did (before I had even moved back!). I've finally gotten to the point recently where I've reigned it in a bit to doing one or two shows a month, though I've been known to get off track with my self imposed limitations.

At some point around 2000, I tried getting a group of people together to work as sort of a booking and promotions collective. Originally, I had been sort of against the idea of giving a name to what was essentially just me booking bands and putting on shows. It also just seemed kind of pompous to make this out to be some "professional" booking agency or whatever. But with this group, we sort of had the idea that if we gave this thing a name, maybe had a logo or something, people would see that, and immediately know what kind of show it was going to be. The basic idea was that all of our shows were going to be all ages and five bucks and that we'd be working with what we saw as quality touring and local bands. I had wanted to call it "An Idea Like No Other" after that line in the Reversal of Man song, but everyone else

was more into calling it "The Robert Paulson League" after that line in Fight Club. So we did that for a couple of shows until everyone else basically lost interest, and I was back to doing shows by myself. So I switched over to the AILNO moniker, and despite booking agents and overpriced venues and overloaded shows, I've kept just about every show all ages and five bucks (I did throw shows at the Dixie Taverne for a while, but the place was essentially all ages with its no carding policy and reputation for serving minors, and I did one "fest" type show with eight or ten touring bands where I charged eight bucks which I would reduce to five if people brought in food donations for Food Not Bombs). Eventually, I adopted this skull "logo" that I started putting on all my flyers. A few years after that, I started putting the "No trends. No cliques" sub text on that as well.

Booking tours started out with the same old friends in Head Pro. They were self-releasing a CD, and we just decided to go out for two weeks one summer in 2001. I've basically gone out on tour every summer since. That first tour was a routing disaster, just a ton of back tracking and long drives. Most of the shows were crap, though we had a blast in Olean, New York, and I did manage to get us on shows with Anthem 88 and As Friends Rust. The next summer I did an Eat A Bag Of Dicks southeast tour which was incredible and then a few months later the Head Pro/Dear Diary I Seem To Be Dead tour out to the West Coast. That tour was actually pretty good, although Dear Diary hadn't played a single show in New Orleans before we left, so it ended up being a nice way to break ourselves in to playing out. The summer after that I didn't have a band, but I was stuck with this fifteen passenger monster van from Dear Diary, so I wanted to make use of it and help some friends out. I had weaseled my way into co-releasing The Faeries CD, and I had booked them this huge three or four week cross country tour. Right before we went on that epic journey, I went out for two weeks with my friends' band from Athens, Georgia, This Scares Me. I met up with them in Oklahoma, and we went out to the west coast for two weeks meeting up with the Evasion kid and taking him with us about halfway through. That was one of the most stress-free tours I've been on, though everyone in the band were at each others' throats most of the time. I got back to New Orleans for a day at the end of that, did their show at my old house The End of Banks, and then took off with the Faeries the next morning. Pretty brutal. It was a good couple of tours though. Seeing the Faeries every night was incredible. They're still one of my favorite New Orleans bands, and one of my all time favorite hardcore bands.

I was also supposed to go out that summer with Memory As Perfection and then after that again with Rat In A Bucket and A Hunger Artist, but I was pretty burnt out at that point, and I had a couple of shows pop up in New Orleans, so I bailed on those. Good thing too, I probably would've killed one of the promoters on that Rat In A Bucket/Hunger Artist tour. I went out with James Hayes the Christmas after that. He did a solo tour playing a bunch of songs that would eventually become a chunk of the Red Beards LP. Katrina summer, I went out with The Ghostwood, who is one of the best bands to come out of New Orleans. The summer after that I went on a long month and half road trip in the van with some friends, Stoop Night tour. Towards the end of that, I took Gather from California out for about two weeks.

And then the summer after that is when all this Thou stuff started. So, yeah, it was basically a combination of wanting to help out my friends and also wanting to use this van I had. And I also wanted to push certain bands in certain directions. So I guess it's a little bit gentle benefactor and a little bit devious mind gangster.

MRR: WHAT ARE YOUR UPCOMING PLANS? WHAT ABOUT UPCOMING RECORDS? ARE YOU SIGNING TO SOUTHERN LORD? WILL THOU EVER RELOCATE TO LOS ANGELES? WHAT MEASURES ARE YOU TAKING TO ALIENATE MEATHEAD METAL DUDES? CAN YOU DELINEATE YOUR 5-POINT PLAN?

Andy: L.A. is a shithole. We're staying in Lousiana for now, like good rednecks. Hopefully our lyrical content has enough feminist rhetoric in it to alienate the metal crowd, but who knows if they read lyrics sheets these days? We can't speak too heavily on our plans for alienation because we don't want them to see it coming, but look at us! We're the skinniest and palest dudes ever! That immediately makes them subtract 10 points from our score, especially overseas where everyone is 6'10". One dude in Ireland referred to us as "Cajun Misery Midgets." Mind-blowing! Bryan, care to expound upon our 5-point plan?

photo by javier villegas

photo by seth kramer

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Bryan: Our five point plan involves: 1. Write as much music as we can that we all enjoy playing; 2. Put out records we like on labels we like and sometimes with bands we like; 3. Never over do it with the shirts and junk like that; 4. Remain as accessible and personable as possible; 5. Do at least one big tour each year, with smaller weekend and holiday tours when we can fit those in. As far as touring goes, we're going to do a few weeks on the west coast this summer with our good friend/chaps from Nottingham, England Moloch. After that, we have some weekend shows planned in July with Altar Of Plagues and Velnias, in August with Fell Voices and Ash Borer, and in September with Kowloon Walled City and Batillus. After that, who knows? Maybe a weekend in Texas, maybe a week in the Midwest, hopefully another trip up to the Northeast.

We have too many upcoming records: splits with Moloch, Pygmy Lush, The City Is The Tower, and Human Intruder; a double LP repress of the Peasant LP which will also include the To Carry a Stone 7" and the Malfeasance/Retribution 10"; some short single cassette versions of Tyrant and Peasant; a self-released EP called To the Chaos Wizard Youth; and vinyl, CD, and cassette versions of our new full length Summit. Some of that stuff will be out in time for the summer tour with Moloch, some of it is coming out right after we get home, and the rest should be done sometime in the fall. After that, we're going to start working on our fourth full length, putting the splits and EPs to rest for a bit.

I'll never live in Los Angeles. Maybe in a cave on a beach in Orange County, but never in that city. If we ever relocated to the West Coast it would be to Berkeley or Oakland. But I think we're all pretty set on remaining true to Louisiana. I just bought a house with my other half Emily McWilliams, so I'm pretty focused on staying in New Orleans for a while. And like Andy said, we have lots of secret plans to alienate metal dudes and crust lords and squares or, really, anyone with a small brain. Get ready!

MRR: HOW COME Y'ALL ARE SO ANGRY?

Andy: We weren't hugged enough as children. No one understands us. We're still upset about Kurt Cobain's death. No one takes our tour rider seriously.

Bryan: Because we recognize the cold hands of civilization wrapped firmly around our throats, choking the vitality out of our lives. And like Andy said, we hate our dads.

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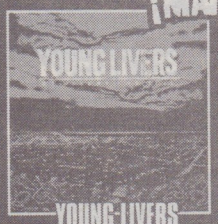

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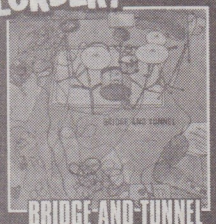

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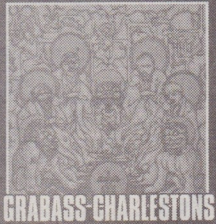

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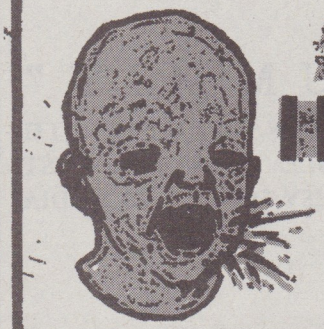

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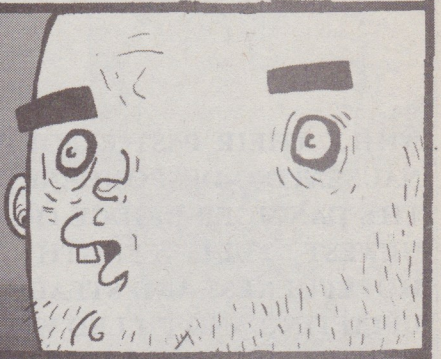

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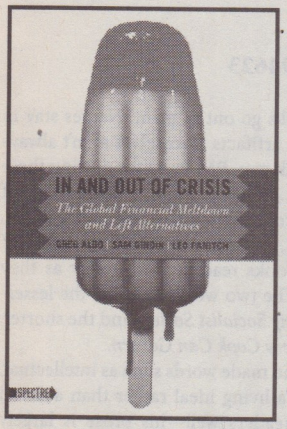

In and Out of Crisis: The Global Financial Meltdown and Left Alternatives
Greg Albo, Sam Gindin, Leo Panitch
140 pages • $13.95
PM Press / Spectre
www.pmpress.org

As Oi Polloi once asked, are we punx or mice? Is the economic crisis the result of stupidity, greed, deregulation, and derivatives—poxy pustules on an otherwise sound system? Or is it the result of structural contradictions of capitalism, contradictions whose management frequently takes the form of stupidity and greed, recently abetted by deregulation and derivatives? If you chose answer #2, collect a gluebag and proceed.

Around the time punk rockers first gobbed on the world, great changes in the capitalist world system were afoot. Punk rock was symptom, signal, and even accelerant of many of these changes. Today, the degree to which the economic crisis is engendering systemic changes remains unclear. Punk rock—ever persistent in its Weltzschmerz, bristles, studs and acne—need not be unprepared either to face a changing world or to aid in its change. Whether three chords, tartan trousers, and shoplifted malt liquor signal preparedness is up to you, but one essential addition to our arsenal is surely *In and Out of Crisis* by Greg Albo, Sam Gindin, and Leo Panitch.

After reading many accounts of the crisis, including some that are quite compelling page-turners (the best are *Meltdown* by Paul Mason and *The Big Short* by Michael Lewis), *In and Out of Crisis* is bracing. It dispenses with the moralistic platitudes and tendentiousness one finds in the mainstream and on the left, without giving the false impression that the system can be patched like a pair of crust pants and sent back into the pit. It is rather a jargon-free, easy-to-read account that focuses neither too closely on the day-to-day details of what has been called "the great unraveling" from summer 2007 to fall 2008, nor gives such a long-distance view that the incompetence, cravenness, guile, and greed of the financiers and the Bush administration lose pertinence. Importantly, in these writers' view, the groundwork for the crisis stretches back further than for most others', to the turbulent late '60s/early '70s, when capitalists found their profit margins imperiled by working-class militancy and began to implement the changes that would be called "neoliberalism," a set of policies and practices intended to restore lost capitalist class power and redirect wealth upwards. (Punk rock, I contend, was the knell whose tolling indicated the end and transformation of the militancies that were growing increasingly obsolescent as the object of their abhorrence—capitalist classes together with capitalist states—was evolving.)

The writers describe their framework as "radical political economy, and in particular its lineages in Marx and state theory," which is accurate but somewhat coded, as many writers on the crisis whose books are much less useful will claim a similar mantle. Moreover, although aimed at a lay audience, this book is engaged in a debate with several strains of present-day Marxist thought. Nevertheless, following the *critique* of political economy launched by Marx, from my perspective, the most important aspect of Albo, Gindin, and Panitch's book is its explosion of the usual dichotomous categories through which most understand the crisis: Wall St./Main St., public/private, state/market. Instead, the dichotomy—or, better put, dialectic—they use, both as a tool of analysis and as a call to political action, is capital/labor.

In mainstream accounts of the crisis, an excessively permissive regulatory climate allowed financial firms to take great risks, including lending money to borrowers who would not be able to repay the loans. Housing prices were increasing and thought to be a fool-proof investment, and as they increased, more and more people who were less and less qualified received first, second, and third mortgages. Like a bolt from the blue, borrowers started to be unable to repay their loans, which set off a cascade of delinquencies. In the days before this permissive regulatory climate mortgages were mostly held by local institutions. Now, they were "sliced and diced," packaged together as bonds that were bought and sold around the globe, with insurance taken out against these bonds—bonds which rating agencies gave perfect grades. The insurance was more lucrative than the rate of returns on the bonds themselves because it seemed so impossible that they would be worthless. Once individual mortgages within the bonds defaulted, the bonds themselves, due to the complex way they were constructed, began to lose value precipitously. Financial firms were exposed to great losses because they were over-leveraged due to regulatory changes, meaning that, for example, for every buck Bear Stearns had in its pocket, it owed $33 in debt. When the debt-collectors came calling—the other big financial firms—because they rightly feared their own mortality, Bear Stearns could not meet its debt obligations. And within several months, due to the highly interconnected world of finance, and despite rescue efforts by the US government, everything came crashing down.

Nothing in this account is untrue. But for Albo, Gindin, and Panitch, the order of causes, the time period in which the causes developed, and most importantly, the relationship between the players are flawed. For them, it is fallacious to construe the relationship between the state and the financial firms as one whereby the former protects the latter from their own avarice. Rather, the state and finance are interrelated pieces of a unitary system that is crisscrossed with contradictions but that ultimately uses each to the benefit of the expansion of global capitalism under the hegemonic aegis of the United States. Whereas some consider the state and its regulatory capacities to be akin to a traffic cop in the global financial architecture, a better analogy, in my view, would be to call the state the builder of the road on which the cop is perched, a road built in the most direct possible way between two ziggurats owned by hedge-fund managers. Oh yeah, the financing for the road's construction? Provided by investors whose names appear in rolodexes on the top floors of those ziggurats. Workers? If they can avoid getting run over and catch a ride on that road, they're lucky—and there's no shortage of obstacles in the way, including all manner of security technologies and prisons to keep them from slowing down traffic.

Back in the days just after the Second World War, the state conceived its role as building a road that would enable workers to get to and from work, to the mutual benefit of labor and capital (of course there were huge gaps here for everyone who wasn't a straight white male). The relationship between finance and the state was less chummy back then but it was still indispensable. What happened is that by the late '60s, just as women and nonwhites were achieving some measure of equality, the mutual benefit thing became a little too mutual in the eyes of capital, for a variety of reasons explained in this book. Two primary results were: first, repression of wages. Since the late 1960s, as you surely perceive, as the rich grew exponentially richer, wages have been essentially stagnant for the working class. The cost of living continually increases, but the size of your paycheck hasn't kept pace. Second, as wages dropped and employment became more precarious (part-time, without benefits, non-union, etc.), capital had a problem generating demand for all the crap it was producing. A seemingly easy fix emerged (through a great deal of political struggle and legal reforms): give those who can't afford to buy the crap ostensibly cheap and easy credit so they *can* afford it. The distance from here to derivatives, mortgage-backed securities, and credit-default swaps was not great. Albo, Gindin, and Panitch do not delve into great detail regarding the world-scale machinations that underwrote this system, with changes in interest rates, balance of payments, trade surpluses, etc., but they give you enough to make clear that these arcane processes, which occasionally leave the business pages and seem to enter everyday life, actually are deeply related to the tangible realities of our labor and our political landscape.

As this book is meant to be an introduction to the crisis, I cannot criticize it for oversimplifying, but I am uncomfortable with two aspects. First, there is too much focus on traditional, Rust Belt industry, like auto manufacturing. Given Albo's former position in the Canadian Autoworkers' Union, this emphasis is expected, but whereas the authors are actually quite admiring of the technological dynamism of capitalism (as was Marx), their focus on the auto industry, which in the US is so dreadfully stodgy, conservative, and cynical, gives them little space to analyze how this dynamism in other spheres of industry nevertheless relates to the overall crisis of capitalism. After all, less than 13% of the US populace is unionized today, and among those who are, government employment predominates. Books like *Nice Work If You Can Get It* by Andrew Ross focus on the ways technological dynamism

is no solution to workers' problems: similarly precarious labor conditions are shared by manual laborers and well-trained internet/information workers—some of whom are surely globe-trotting friends of yours. Second, although the book is careful to mention that extending credit to the poor is not a new phenomenon and has always been conceived as a way to keep the poor in line, tacitly supporting capital's needs as they struggle to make their monthly payments, a more acute analysis of the racialized and gendered dynamics of the lead-up to the crisis and its fallout is absolutely necessary if we are to organize against its recurrence. Nonetheless, this book is a start in diagnosing the problem, which to punx should be clear—capitalism!—and in explicating exactly what that vexed term has come to mean in our lifetimes. What is to be done? This question is not so easily answered, but the book offers some guidance. One of the book's answers, though still requiring more specifics, will be easily recognizable to readers of this magazine: *do it ourselves*, outside the logics of capital accumulation. True then, true now. Are we punx or mice?

—Stuart Schrader

Historias Del Buenos Aires Hardcore
Julian Vadala
176 Pg. Spanish - $?
Tiempo De Cambio Ediciones
www.rolta.com.ar
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Roughly between the years 1987 and 1998 in the capital of Argentina, Buenos Aires, hardcore, skate and straight edge came together giving way to a movement that author Julian Vadala documents here along with fellow participants of the time, putting together their memories, experiences and active involvement in the pages and pictures of the book *Historias del Buenos Aries Hardcore*. Working class neighborhoods like Catalinas Sur, La Boca, Telmo Oestes were epicenters where ideas of vegetarianism, veganism and straight edge flourished then entered into active life styles among the younger members of the scene.

In the format of scene reports, the book presents the versions of events by the people who were there, retelling their experiences of the shows, record labels, venues, zines, all mentioned now on am almost mythical level. These vivid reports are combined with the author's interviews and his own accounts of his band of the time, XAutocontrolX.

Sharing stages and equipment with touring bands of the likes of Agnostic Front and Sick of it All also left a lasting impression on a movement that was already beginning to take hold by 1992, one that eventually became represented in the local DIY comps like *Mentes Abiertas, Hardcore: Asunto Nuestro* and *Nuestras Generaciones* (cassette only), and through the bands that kept it growing and expanding: Minoria Activa, No Demuestra Interes, I.T.A., Existencia de Odio and Distintas Actitudes Juveniles. The stories take you back to days and nights where young skaters before going on to form such bands would sit around listening to shared tapes of NY Hardcore and contemplating doing something different yet positive. Moving away from a consumer based life style of excess and thinking about expressing that in a musically conscious message to be shared.

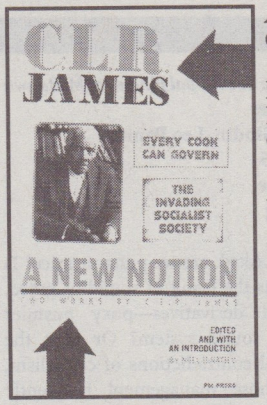
The scene hit its peak with a boom of bands it seems by 1994 with such names as Comfort Supremo, Siempre Unidad, Conviccion, Redencion, Bhakti, Despertar, Extremo Opuesto, Flores del Sol, one of the few bands of the time with female members. There's also a quick note with Flavio, Bassist of ska-pop super group Los Fabulosos Cadillacs and his connection to the scene with his label Resiste Records and his relation to the bands Masacre Palestina, Distinas Actitudes Juveniles and Minoria Activa.

The DIY ethos and the positive, constructive message of straight edge was key to the scene and came to be represented through its many zines, some of them like *Cooperativa Straight Edge Libertaria*. This was published initially in the form of a bulletin, explaining reasons and opinions about the SXE lifestyle and including topics such as animal rights, sexism, and religion. Other zines are mentioned that circulated at the time were: *Tiempo De Cambio, Inocencia, Juventudm Desidencia, Reflexion, Liberacion, Conflicto.*

Everyone involved that was available for interview almost in unison agrees that to have been part of the Buenos Aires SXE movement pretty much changed their lives in a constructive way into adulthood, some moved on musically but ideologically stayed true, some even chose a spiritual path (Hare Krishna), others were surprised to have been involved in something they thought would just remain part of their neighborhoods and circle of friends.

In a time capsule, the book takes you back to another place and time without being overly sentimental or nostalgic and in their own words they seem to express this best. Fido, a member of Firme Actitud, Propia Decision, Yoda, summarizes clearly what the SXE movement meant to him: "El Punk Rock me slavo la vida, el hardcore me la transformo, y el SXE la mantiene viva," (Punk rock saved my life, hardcore transformed it and SXE maintains my livelihood"). To most SXE faithfuls, these might be words to live by, yet to some, they might even be inscribed around their X tattooed hands.

—Augustine



A New Notion: Two Works
C.L.R. James
155 pages • $16.95
PM Press
PO Box 23912
Oakland, CA 94623

As with vinyl, books go out of print. Names stay in circulation but the artifacts themselves aren't always accessible. So thank you, PM Press for putting these two works by C.L.R. James back in print. A giant in the fields of colonial studies, Pan-Africanism, self-determination, labor studies (*and* the sport of cricket), James's books read as fresh today as they did decades ago. The two works here are the lesser-known *The Invading Socialist Society* and the shorter, more palatable *Every Cook Can Govern*.

James was one of the rare, precious humans who made words such as intellectual, activist, sports writer, and Marxist lecturer into a living ideal rather than a dread cul-de-sac. His journalism background serves readers well—his prose is largely accessible, his essays understandable and his commitments never less than clear. This is no small accomplishment as one wades into the academic, literary and political worlds.

But enough background, let's get to the actual reviewing! "Representative democracy" is a phrase he uses often in these two pieces, and these particular essays were chosen as a solid introduction to James's worldview. From the intro: "Together, these two works represent the principal themes that run through James's life: implacable hostility toward all "condescending saviors" of the working class, and undying faith in the power of ordinary people to build a better world." From here I trust you'll know whether you want to read further.

The Invading Socialist Society is a five-part essay, written with Raya Dunayevskaya in 1947 and primarily about issues within the Trotskyist Fourth International. So that's a bit off-putting to non-Marxist scholars. Perhaps I was spoiled by first reading James's more personal book on incarceration and *Moby Dick—Mariners, Renegades and Castaways*. But I did enjoy the glimpses of his own frustrations in the footnotes: "How ridiculous all the disputes about the dictatorship of the party over the masses already begin to appear!" Taken as a whole the five pieces are prescient, particularly the chapter on imperialism.

If there's a stiffness in parts of his writing, it's the formality of manners, the deliberate pacing of a teacher who wants to make sure you can follow. Readers accustomed to contemporary lightspeed theorists should enjoy this more leisurely pace.

To be completely fair his Marxism is of a rare stripe. The terms of global capitalism, colonialism and workplace dynamics have not changed to the point where James's theories are moot. Dialectical relations—the opposing forces of worker/boss, individual/masses, and autonomy/assimilation – these threads remain pertinent.

The subtitle to *Every Cook Can Govern* is "a study of democracy in ancient Greece / Its Meaning for Today". Greek democracy was not the U.S. style of governance by the elite. The Greeks used sortition—selection by lot, a bit like jury duty today. Names were chosen—there weren't big elections.
Public forums were held. I.e., direct democracy. The appeal is clear:
"History is a living thing. It is not a body of facts. We today who are faced with the inability of representative government and parliamentary democracy to handle effectively the urgent problems of the day, we can study and understand Greek Democracy in a way that way impossible for a man who lived in 1900…"

I worry the editor / publisher misstepped here though putting the longer Socialist piece first. *Every Cook Can Govern* should be read initially, an enticement to go further. Because surely some readers will not make it all the way through *The Invading Socialist Society* essays, not caring about Trotsky and the factions, minorites and tendencies therein. As with music though, we don't always start our exposure in a logical or linear manner. For the uninitiated, I'd recommend either *The Black Jacobins* (a history of Toussaint L'Ouverture) or his cricket study *Beyond a Boundary*.

—Travis Fristoe

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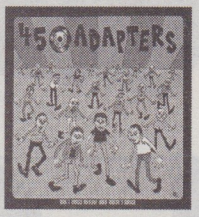

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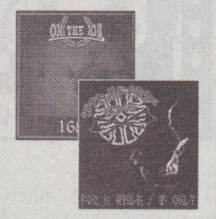

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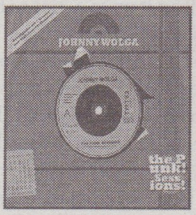

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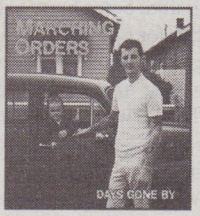

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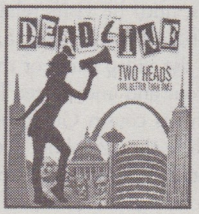

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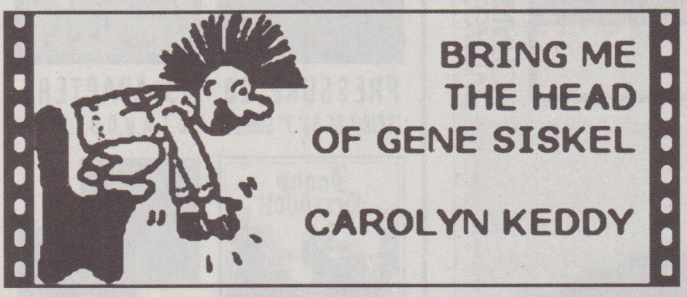

LIFE REMOTE CONTROL

I always enjoy when I am walking along and unexpectedly see an entertaining or just cool piece of art where there wasn't one the day before. Like in the early morning hours when I am still half-asleep walking those few block from the BART station to work. Most people probably call it graffiti. Some hurry to clean it up so as not to bring down the neighborhood. But for others like me it may cause a smile. Then the next day, it may be gone. I am also impressed when you see something in a place that seems almost impossible to get to. I'll think about it briefly, but that's about it. That is why I was interested in seeing **Exit Through The Gift Shop**. I've seen the art on the streets. I've seen it in galleries. Now I want the inside story.

What I get is a little bit more than that. **Exit Through The Gift Shop** is mostly the story of Thierry Guetta a family man who lives in Los Angeles, owns a clothing store and loves to video tape everyone and everything. His penchant for documenting his daily life seems innocent enough, if not annoying to others, until he visits relatives in France and discovers his cousin is graffiti artist Space Invader. Space Invader creates mosaics of the characters from the video game of the same name and puts them around cities in humorous and unexpected locations. His graffiti is subtle and beautiful. Through his cousin Guetta meets other street artists and begins to film them while they go about creating their art. The result is some amazing footage that the majority of people would never get to see otherwise.

Guetta not only follows the artists around with his camera; he helps them do their work. Guetta is as fearless as any of the artists. Seemingly a matter of being in the right place at the right time Guetta meets Shepard Fairey. Guetta starts assisting Fairey around Los Angeles while continually filming. Fairey starts taking Guetta along on trips to other cities. Guetta is now so involved in documenting everything about street art that he only needs to meet the one artist everyone keeps mentioning Banksy. That ends up being easier than one would expect though just another matter of being in the right place at the right time for Guetta. Banksy needs some help in Los Angeles. Guetta is recommended so Banksy calls him.

All of this should have made a great documentary on its own. When pressured by Banksy to finish the documentary Guetta realizes he is in over his head. He has not labeled any of the hundreds of videotapes. He also doesn't know anything about putting together a film. Guetta hires an editor and they edit the footage into an unwatchable mess. Some of the resulting film **Life Remote Control** is shown in **Exit Through The Gift Shop**. It is pretty annoying, really quick cuts of unrelated bits. Banksy takes over the footage telling Guetta he should focus on making some art. He does.

Guetta transforms himself into Mr. Brainwash and tries his hand at being a street artist. He has lots of experience helping out others. His first attempt at it is strangely a picture of himself. While others seem to want to keep their identity more secretive, Mr. Brainwash puts his picture right out there. Inspired further Mr. Brainwash begins to compose bigger pieces leading up to his own show. Fortunately for our entertainment value Mr. Brainwash doesn't do anything subtly.

I am more interested in the graffiti artists at work on the street. There is a lot of good footage in **Exit Through The Gift Shop**. Watching Banksy work is really impressive. I am particularly awed by his success at getting a life-size inflatable Guantanamo detainee displayed at Disney World. That takes guts. I have heard stories of how crazy the security can be there. He escapes, but Guetta is questioned by security. He doesn't give up his friend and still manages to get away with the video. Banksy art is political and exciting. As the narrator says at the beginning of the film, "street art was poised to become the biggest countercultural movement since punk". Then there's Mr. Brainwash.

Mr. Brainwash's story is equally fascinating. How can someone with seemingly little original talent become a big deal in the art world? Mr. Brainwash had the ambition and wasn't afraid to go for it. His connections with Fairey and Banksy ignited the hype. Banksy gave Mr. Brainwash his advertising slogan "Mr. Brainwash is a force of nature, he's a phenomenon. And I don't mean that in a good way." It could easily be argued that what he does isn't much different from the other artists. I keep thinking about how people always say the early punks couldn't play their instruments. Then later when you really look at it or tried it yourself you realize they could. It was just what people thought and the myth somehow keeps propagating to this day. In Mr. Brainwash's case he hired other artists to do the work for him. He gave them the ideas. I think he knew what he was doing. Does he have talent or is it easy to fool people in the art world? Or is the film just painting him that way? Of course, people speculate that the whole thing is a hoax put on by Banksy himself. I don't really care because either way **Exit Through The Gift Shop** is an incredibly entertaining and thought provoking film. (www.banksyfilm.com)

Joe Strummer Get Up, Stand Up comes across as a eulogy for Joe Strummer. I can't decide whether that is nice or kind of creepy. The documentary features interviews with his Clash bandmates Mick Jones and Topper Headon as well as members of his last band the Mescaleros and various other friends. Each aspect of Joe Strummer's life is dissected and discussed. Everyone has a thought and a feeling that they aren't afraid to share. There is very little interview footage of Strummer himself, which gives it that feeling of sitting around reminiscing with people about someone you don't really know. I know his music, but should I really be listening in on his friends as they mourn?

The woman who runs Strummer's US website says Strummer's fans are obsessive. Therefore I figure those fans will want to see **Joe Strummer Get Up, Stand Up**. Besides the interviews it does have some cool live footage particularly an impromptu reunion in 2002 with Mick Jones when Strummer was playing a London benefit for striking firefighters. The two play a couple of Clash songs and Jones recalls that Strummer's jokingly insulted him after.

The DVD also comes with an audio CD compilation of interviews with Strummer from 1979 to 2001. Here Strummer gets to refute if necessary anything his friends may have said about it him on the DVD. (Pride DVD, PO Box 230, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 6YY, UK)

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to Carolyn Keddy, PO Box 460402, San Francisco, CA 94146-0402. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area, let me know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. I will go see it. www.carolynkeddy.com

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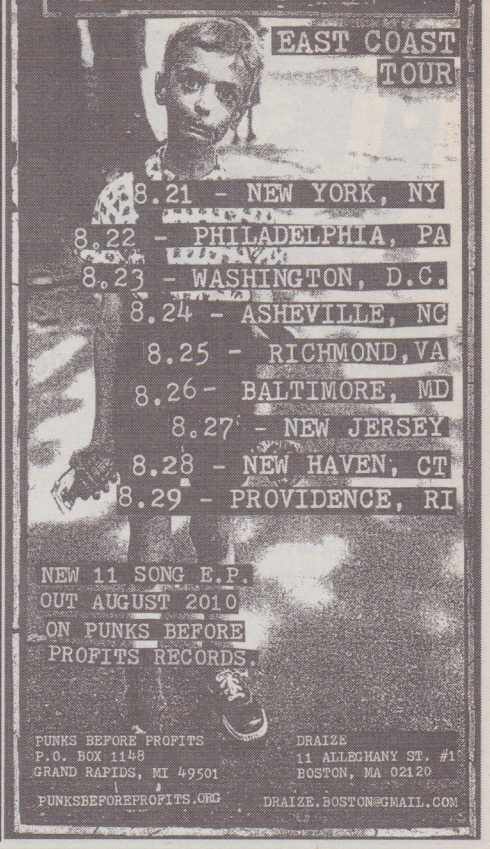

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ABUSIVE ACTION – "Unbreakable" EP

This defunct Dutch band's 7", recorded in 2004 but unreleased until now, is included with the third issue of *Voice of a Generation*, reviewed in our zine section. You can tell from one glance at the cover that they are heavily influenced by NYHC. Thankfully, it's the kind where dudes play fast hardcore with the occasional breakdown, not the kind where the breakdown is the whole song. This stuff is tough, catchy enough, and to the point. I don't think many kids will be won over to the savage mosh of Europe by this EP, but for those of you already committed, you could do worse. (JM)
(Crucial Response)

ACID DROP – "Drop Zone" CD

Someone owns a lot of the Fat Wreck and Epitaph catalog, and they happen to play in ACID DROP. *Drop Zone* starts off with a track that could easily be a ONE MAN ARMY song where they go in a more poppy direction; the next one just rips off riffs from NOFX, and it goes from there. Not that this is a bad thing, 'cause ACID DROP does it well. I am not sure if they do it well enough to knock anyone off my turntable (or in this case, out of my CD player). Solid, but I think you need to be a real fan of this genre to purchase this. (JF)
(Acid Drop)

ACROSTIC CODEX – "The Funeral Mountains" CD

This is an interesting record. It has the feel of countrymates BURNT CROSS and A.U.K.—dark, primitive anarcho-punk that's much less melodic and more macabre than their American counterparts playing in the style. ACROSTIC CODEX is much more RUDIMENTARY PENI and AMEBIX than NO CHOICE and RUBELLA BALLET. They have audible metal influences from bands like BATHORY and VOIVOD, but the sound is most definitely anarcho-punk. The vocals are dual male/female and the songs are full of catchy, anthemic choruses. Wow (listening now)… I'm really into this CD! It's a catchy synthesis of anarcho-punk and blackened metal punk, a synthesis that's been begging to happen—and has happened, but not successfully in such a primitive and boneheaded way. Unlike most overly self-serious black metal, however, the experience of listening to ACROSTIC CODEX is, for me, very fun but still dark and pretty snotty. Fuckin' cool. (DB)
(self-released)

ADA+MAX – "…Was Lurking on the 13th Floor" CD

A great first album of metal-riffed hardcore from Japan's ADA+MAX. There are some *awesome* riffs/*Bet On the Possibility*-style lead-ups (though maybe with less harmonics, but the core of the riffs, their tone and mood is really similar and killer), but the overall attack of ADA+MAX is more akin to classic 1980s ROSE ROSE—wicked yelped vocals and lightning-quick, quirky, musically proficient, drum-driven thrash. Horror-themed lyrics and song titles ("Seed of Zombie," "Wolf Blood" "Dance on Your Grave") and creepy samples that give you a breather between thrash fits all seal the deal. As classic Japanese hardcore has reached broader international recognition, the more amazing lesson is that it's a still-evolving scene and sound, with bands like ADA+MAX standing as testament to that. *Killer!* (KS)
(Answer)

THE AGITATORS – "Among Friends" CD

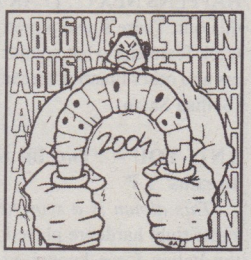
Oi! Oi! Oi! The AGITATORS from Belgium are a rousing sing-along street-punk band with the finest of influences ranging from the classics like the COCKNEY REJECTS to the more modern like HARD SKIN!! There are twelve songs on this CD and each and every one of 'em will have you singing along, and if you are a sucker for streetpunk rock'n'roll that covers all the usual subject matter of football (soccer), drinking beer, loyalty to your friends, etc., then you will dig this band… (ML)
(High Lake Hill)

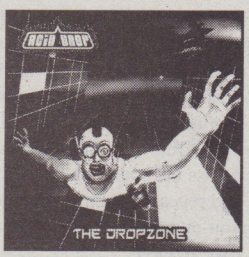
ALICJA POP – "Shinning Apple/Walking the Cow"

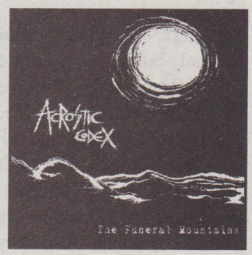
I was very excited when I saw this. (No, I was not *that* excited.) Given the spelling of ALICJA and the fact that this is from Memphis, this is clearly the ALICJA of RIVER CITY TANLINES fame. I love me some RIVER CITY TANLINES. Others probably know her from the LOST SOUNDS. This is very mellow, pretty, quiet, synth-driven pop music that showcases her voice. The only thing it has in common with her RIVER CITY TANLINES stuff is that both are extremely catchy. It reminds me of the great pop band FROM BUBBLEGUM TO SKY. Great record. (KK)
(Certified PR)

THE ANCHOR / IN THE RED – split EP

One word: Florida. No, two words: Gainesville, Florida. "No shit," I can already hear you say or "Ooooh, really?!" for the equally sarcastic yet less toilet-trapped few, as this is a Tampa, FL-based Kiss of Death release after all. However, the general sound both of these bands fall into (I could write a fat one with a bunch of names, but it is most easily and still accurately summed up by these three words: No Idea Records) reminds me only of one thing—being at the Fest. A perfect background track to having a really amazing epiphany of a conversation (with someone you've just met), making out with a bloke who has a beard that tastes of five-star pizza grease and having an arm full of wrist bands to the elbow. So, if the No Idea Sound is your thing, or if you're just nostalgic for those balmy autumn days and nights spent partying at Fest, grab a warm PBR, take off your shirt and listen on. Just don't get so fucked you pass out behind Checkers







and get chewed to death by ants. (GG)
(Kiss of Death)

ANDREW JACKSON JIHAD / THE GUNSHY – split EP

ANDREW JACKSON JIHAD has always reminded me of a less poppy ONION FLAVORED RINGS, and this release is no different. I know some people go crazy for the band, but it isn't me. Now, the GUNSHY side is something I am digging—melodic, almost Plan-It-X bike punk complete with horns and gruff vocals that sound more like Tommy Strange of STRAWMEN then Lemmy or Frankie Stubbs. The GUNSHY side alone makes this a winner for me. (JF)
(Silver Sprocket Bicycle Club)

ANTISEXY – "El Lurido" CD

24 tracks of fast, thrashing madness sung (mostly) in Italian. Despite a pretty budget-looking cover, this is solid and really well done. If you're a fan of WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?, TEAR IT UP and the like, check this out. There's also a pretty entertaining six-minute track featuring what sounds like clips of TV preachers and other lunatics screaming in Italian. Cool. (JH)
(Selfish Satan)

ANTI-YOU – "Two Bit Schemes and Cold War Dreams" LP

This album is a scorcher!! Six Weeks brings us super tight hardcore played with fury and passion by the Italian force known as ANTI-YOU. They have graced us with a couple EPs thus far, only to drop this killer full-length that really solidifies the band as a true torch-barer of the classic punk rock sound. Fast, aggressive and straight to the point! This record reminds me of the essential *City Shock* by SOCIAL CIRCLE, a compliment not lightly given. Punks across the spectrum will be able to enjoy this record and repeat listenings become mandatory! This is get-you-pumped/face-the-day hardcore done right. (RM)
(Six Weeks)

APACHE – "Radical Sabbatical" LP

Real talk fuckin express: People don't like APACHE because they look fuckin weird. Singer Apache hisself is a half-sized Mex dressed like some luded-out '70s broad and moves like a coked-out cat on stage, but hell, deal with it—it's the Burger Records version of a mohawk and leather. The music on this LP is, in my well-informed and ultimately *correct* "opinion" (forced by editors to call it such), is a hell of a lot better than their bizarrely produced first record. Songs and such. Slower. Tho I hate the track "Finger Banger" on this rec, I would for sure completely stick digits in dorsal and feel pretty good about it if this record was for some reason on my stereo. Too bad I don't listen to anything but LOU REED. (BB)
(Burger)

ATOMIC SUPLEX / THEE BAT – "Horrific! Scarifying!" EP

THEE BAT is from Japan and ATOMIC SUPLEX is from the UK. The former has a female singer; the latter has a male. Both sound very noisy, trashy and fuzzed-out. Garage punk that immediately brings to mind TEENGENERATE (but only as a reference). It's simple, fast and messy. It's like a trip back to the early '90s. This is great. (CK)
(Swamp Fiction)

AUXES / OBSTACLES – split EP

AUXES stray not far from the label's namesake of Revolution Summer innovation, most notably falling in line with later-day patrons FUGAZI. There are hints of a less-ambitious INTERNATIONAL NOISE CONSPIRISY and the more austere post-punk aggression notable in the long-lost GOSSPLE from New York City. OBSTACLES devote themselves to math-rock obscurity, combining dizzying guitar leads with low-end drowsiness. Completely instrumental, they fail to provide the entertainment one would expect from a purely instrumental display. (RM)
(Revolution Summer)

AXEWIELD – "War Machine" CD

Having previously gushed over AXEWEILD's *Wisdom of Doom* 12" a couple of months ago, I was quite pleased to see this in my review pile. I have to say, though, that I'm about five minutes in and I have yet to start feeling it. The way overboard acoustic/electric stereotypical crust intro (spoken word part and all) is completely inessential. But that ordeal out of the way, the first real track ("Ominous Dream") is a mid-to-fast paced rager that recalls all the best elements of EFFIGY. The second delves further into metal crust territory with a full-on SLAYER-style solo and that trend continues throughout. Over all, this CD is much more metallic and much less AMEBIX-influenced than the 12", to the degree that it could almost be two different bands' recordings. The synth that played such a prominent role in shaping the atmosphere of the other record is nowhere to be heard here. This CD is much more comparable to the early efforts of post-crust bands like PARADISE LOST or PROPHECY OF DOOM. It's definitely a great listen though; the recording is fantastic (*big* bass sound and it steers well clear of sounding too polished) and everything save the intro is well worth enjoying if you're a fan of hyper-metallic crust or primitive metal. (AU)
(Hardcore Kitchen)

THE BACK CC'S – "No More Gasoline in My Car/Come on Baby"

A-side is a TEENGENERATE style blast with an early-KINGSMEN-style looseness—nice! B-side throws in a surf-style riff (à la the RUMBKLERS' mighty "I Don't Need You No More" into the stew. Double-sided winner and they gave so little of a fuck that there's no address. Class! (DD)
(¡Puta!)

BASTARD SQUAD / ELEPHANT MAN – split CD

These recordings have been kicking around for a while now. BASTARD SQUAD laid these tracks in 2004; the ELEPHANT MAN info is printed so tiny that even with my magnifying glass I couldn't learn anything, but I think they've been gone for some time as well. These bands share a member (ex-PLUTOCRACY) and identify with the wealthy suburbs of the West Bay. BASTARD SQUAD is heavy as hell, mixing it up with swinging headbanging jams, sick grind and many an ode to Satan. They're fucked up like a metal NO LESS. The studio seems to have helped ELEPHANT MAN, 'cuz the singer sound way tougher and rougher than I remember, and the drummer is much improved. They play metallic hardcore, hitting a nice groove when they slow it down some. They're not quite tight enough to really kill the thrash parts. The bass player is rad. This disc is recommended for fans of crazy Satanic hardcore-influenced metal, and also people who are enjoy movie samples. (JM)
(RSR)

BESTHOVEN – "Born to Kill Dreams" 10"

10" disc with eight more discharges of "Dis-Cimex" from the one-man dismachine from distant Brazil, distinguished by disproving and disquieting any disappointment or dissatisfaction you'd think you'd discern or discover from a band disadvantaged from the potential disarray or disorder of distinctly lacking a full line-up. Disguised under and distinguished by walls of torrentially distributed riffs at the (now disseminated worldwide) classic ANTI-CIMEX pacing and riffage, the dispatch by this disciple of DIS destroys any disillusionment as it disperses distinctive disharmonic dissonance and distortion. Lyrics discuss disgust with the disaster of war and distressed, disconsolate, disturbed feelings about war. No discarded tracks make this disk, nicely packaged in a gatefold sleeve. For the discriminating dis-fan. (KS)
(Symphony of Destruction)

BETTY AND THE WEREWOLVES – "Teatime Favourites" CD

England belongs to twee once again, as transistors around the provinces are tuned to the breathless girl-pop stylings of BETTY AND THE WEREWOLVES. Actually, it's not all Sarah Records, anoraks, pigtails and Brownie badges: the 'WOLVES dabble in a bit of garagey punk as well. Imagine a cross between HEAVENLY, THEE HEADCOATEES, and the PIPETTES, and you're onto something. This stuff makes me happy. (AM)
(Damaged Goods)

BLACK CONGRESS – "Davidians/London's Burning"

An absurdly scarce record (from what I hear only 250 pressed) consisting of a rather boring couple of songs that tread the borders along the proggy/stoney/thick aftermath of jaded post-punks. I get a weird indie vibe from this release that should have been confined to years past—a trite ode to JESUS LIZARD, maybe. A noise element is apparent but not obvious. Bass heavy and screamy. These songs carry notable melody guided by traditional instruments but dominated by mid-tempo yelling and simplistic loudness. Repetitive and uninteresting not unlike the horrid MOUTHBREATHER 10". (RM)
(self-released)

BLACK FEELINGS / GRAND TRINE – split EP

GRAND TRINE sounds like a tuff, sludged-out version of the PIXIES… I can't tell if it's the whole thing or the guy's dudely vocals that are bumming me out, but either way it's "eh." BLACK FEELINGS sounds like if DEVO got psychedelic, groovy and kind of emo (not a good thing). Altogether, I don't really care. (MM)
(Blue Skies Turn Black)

BLATZ – "Cheaper Than the Beer" EP

I love this band. They were from the East Bay, '90-92 or so, and released this EP, a split 7" with TRIBE 8 and a split LP with FILTH. The LP is so, so, so fucking rad. This EP is not as good. It's bouncy, kinda catchy punk, with clever hateful lyrics, a snotty dude singer and two alternately pleasant sounding and grating lady singers. Two of these five songs are done better on the split LP. There are too many really

great records in this world to invest your time in this one. (JM)
(Life Is Abuse)

BRAIN EATERS – "Girl From S.I.N." EP

Can't recall if I ever saw the flick the title track is named for, but I'm sure these French garageniks more than did it justice. These *hommes de un certain regard* love American trash, including rock and roll, *vraiment*! Another track is dedicated to Lux Interior and there's also a tale of the Parisian swamps, *alors*! (DD)
(Fuck-U)

BRAINS – "Zombie Nation" CD

Good pyschobilly horror punk. Punk enough to be in *MRR*, but still solidly psychobilly enough for those of you who are fans of that genre. Better than HORROR POPS or TIGER ARMY, but not as good as MAD SIN (whose members guest appear on this disc). (JF)
(Stomp)

THE BRISTLES – "Reflections of the Bourgeois Society" CD

It's my understanding that Sweden's BRISTLES took a few years (25?) off, before getting a new singer and drummer and returning to the arena. This shit compares favorably to their earlier stuff. The guitars are a bit heavier, they're a little less pogo, but they still write good songs and hate society. This is fast angry hardcore with shouted vocals, executed well. (JM)
(Switchlight)

BUTCHER COVER – "Human Scrap" EP

This is some rad shit from Oakland. Abrasive, uncompromising audio waves that penetrate the skull. This was recorded as a duo on a four-track but I believe the band has now doubled in size. They have already released a hard-to-find tape, and because this single is part of a singles club that is limited to 210 copies, it will be hard to find this, too. If you don't understand the reference of the band name, I urge you to stop listening to punk, stop reading this magazine and go learn something about music. (MU)
(Lemon Session)

CAPITALIST CASUALTIES / LACK OF INTEREST – split 7"

Included with the latest issue of *Short, Fast and Loud* fanzine. CAPITALIST CASUALTIES are considerably more lo-fi in attack and dredge up some of the FUNERAL SHOCK-ish, FANG-styled dirge between their trademark blasting. It works, and like on their split with HELLNATION the lyrics again prove that CAPITALIST are the current kings of ripping topics out of current news headlines and spitting it back with venom that I think so many people feel, but too few voice. Excellent stuff. LACK OF INTEREST, with their dual singers and the BURN YOUR BRIDGES Dodge/Bob Deep Six line-up, don't vary with their piranha-like attack of tight blasts of intensely focused thrash. Killer! (KS)
(Six Weeks)

CAPITALIST CASUALTIES / MAN IS THE BASTARD – split LP

Fuck, I love this fucking record! Anyone who uses the term "powerviolence" to describe weak-ass normal dude hardcore like TRASH TALK needs this jammed into their eardrums until they start to bleed from their eyes. Originally released back in 1994 and resurrected by the fine folks at Six Weeks, this is one of the greatest split LPs punk has produced. On the A-side you have some of the strongest material CAPITALIST CASUALTIES produced in their pre-Max Ward era, with songs like "Waste Life," "You Explode" and "Fuck the Christians" giving you a reason to hate if you didn't have one already. Fast, fucked up hardcore played by speedfreaks, longhairs and dropouts from the wrong side of the tracks. If these thirteen tracks don't do something for you, then you're just dead inside. Flip it over and you've got the inimitable sonic monstrosity (and absolute genius) that was MAN IS THE BASTARD. Creepy-crawly bass lines, schizoid guitars, a layer of noise and bizarre lyrics all combine to twist your ideas of what hardcore is and can be into a fucking knot. These tracks are from before they went full-blown noise, and there are actually some killer songs here in all the madness, as good as anything else the band ever produced. This is just a goddamn essential record, and if you don't think you need to own it then I really don't want to know you. Fuck off and die, this is the real shit. (VX)
(Six Weeks)

THE CHICKENS – "CHICKEN SHIT" EP

Cool stuff from ex-FNU RONNIES dudes. Melodic bass-lines under choppy guitars with reverb-soaked vocals and a drum machine that sounds like shit (in a good way). If you can find one of the 400 copies, it's worth picking up. (MU)
(Siltbreeze)

THE CHOSEN FEW – "The Joke's on Us" EP

Gotdamn! It's not every day you get one of your all-time faves in your review pile! Legit straight reissue of Australian '70s punk rock monster, including all six (*six!*) original cuts. Every fan of first wave Aussie punk I know rates this in their Personal Top Five and up. Imagine RADIO BIRDMAN if they were rawer, tougher and charmingly boneheaded…then crank it up to 11! This stuff's been through the reissue mill before, most notably on the Italian Hate Records' double-LP retrospective in the early '00s. This hand-numbered 500 press caters to all you OG fetishists who don't have a high three-digit wad to blow on an original. I'm stoked they changed the color of the cover to elude shady internet shysters, and yet somehow this brand new reissue is already commanding some crazy internet money. Hopefully y'all in need can still find one at retail. Dig the FEW! (GB)
(Dirty Dog)

THE CLICHÉS – "Monkey See, Monkey Do" CD

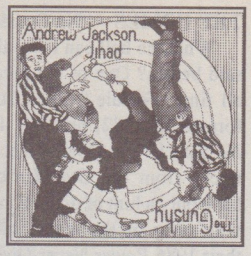
German skinhead trio performs some pop-Oi (more woah-ohs than terrace chants). They're certainly no VANILLA MUFFINS, though are decent enough for the genre, I s'pose. Ironically, given their chosen name, they never stray beyond the typical lyrical concerns of drinking on a Friday night and castigating others for not being real skinheads, but poseurs. Yawn. (RK)
(Randale)

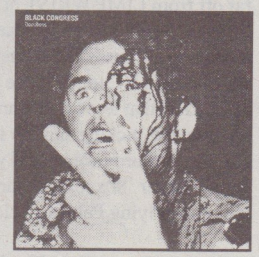
COFFINS / STORMCROW – split LP

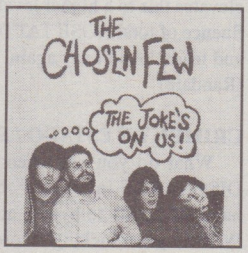
I'm really excited about this crusty death metal punk offering! The STORMCROW side contains the epic song "Path to Defeat," which starts off pretty blisteringly before decaying into really doomy territory. The usual BOLT THROWER influence is present but the band also draws from death/doom groups like INCANTATION and WORSHIP. The riffs are top notch and Brian's vocals are as sick as ever. On the other side, COFFINS offer up two songs straight from the cave—plodding, primitive, and full of hooks. They've perfected this punkish death metal, taking most of their inspiration from CELTIC FROST and other heavily influenced by the aforementioned like DIVINE EVE and CIANIDE. The cover has awesome artwork done by Digestor of GHOUL. My favorite split of the year so far. Fuckin' death! (DB)
(20 Buck Spin)

COMBAT CRISIS – "Face the Crowd" CD

Year-old CD from this Pennsylvania band—I guess they have a new EP out now/soon. COMBAT CRISIS plays hard-edged street punk that isn't particularly distinctive, but is tightly delivered with spirit. The lyrics express both forward-thinking political sentiments ("We Represent," "Listen Up," "Face the Crowd") and time-tested punk defiance ("Your Life"). Kinda boring artwork that looked like it was designed on a computer in 30 mintues. Overall, a decent effort—couldn't hurt to look into these folks if you're a fan of modern-day street punk. (CS)
(Concrete Umbrella)







THE COMES – "No Outsider" LP

What the hell can I say about this that hasn't been said before? One of the greatest hardcore records of all time. Female-fronted Tokyo hardcore band that formed in 1982, and this bootleg pairs their 1985 *No Side* 12" on Dogma Records with their three live tracks from the *Outsider* compilation. The guitars have only a hint of distortion, the music is 100% punk with none of the metal influence that appeared on their 1986 *Power Never Die* LP (which is also a killer record) and the vocals are not screechy, but tough and urgent. The quality of this bootleg is top-notch. The live comp tracks start out low, but turn up a few seconds in and are clear enough to hear everything going on. I am not a fan of the live track in general, but this shit is good and the fact that this is a boot makes no difference. Attention all women and woman-identified punks, find this record, 'cuz hearing this lady tear it up on this good of a bootleg will change your life. (MB)
(bootleg)

COP DE FONA – "Estafats I Traïts" EP

These Spanish punks have a sound that's not too far off from LIMP WRIST or VOETSEK in their early days. Solid, screaming hardcore punk with some nice gang choruses and a busy bass player who lends an '80s Euro HC touch to the proceedings. Five songs at 45 RPM that leave you wanting more. I'd definitely recommend picking this up if you're into the whole No Way Records scene or if you have a taste for non-cookie cutter '80s revival hardcore. (AU)
(Carnús / Flying Peluca / Sclérose / etc.)

THE CORPS – "Hold Fast" LP

Fuck yes! It is no secret that I absolutely *love* (almost) all things Australian when it comes to rock'n'roll!! And the CORPS do not let me down at all!! From the opening beat of the drums on the first track "The Whiskey Talking" to the decay of the final chord of the title track "Hold Fast," this eight-song 12" slab of red wax kicks ass! These hardened looking Aussies of the skinhead/street-punk variety—with cropped hair, Fred Perrys and tattoos in abundance—fit the bill, but more importantly the music oozes with a fine pedigree of punk rock'n'roll. With powerful vocals almost rivaling Jeff Clayton (of ANTISEEN fame) and thundering guitars, bass and drums, this is bloody solid punk rock for sure, but the element that elevates this to a higher level is the infused Aussie influence of total ROSE TATTOO sounding slide guitar and leads!! And I say again, fuck yes! (ML)
(Randale)

CRIMEN DE ESTADO / SUDOR – split LP

What do you get when you combine two killer DISCHARGE-influenced bands from Spain that have the ability to bypass any hint of generic sound? Well…a great fucking record! The CRIMEN DE ESTADO side is stripped-down, fast as all hell, blown-out and tough. SUDOR is just as raw and driving, with more mid-tempo tracks and are less blown-out, but just as badass with higher-pitched vocals. This is straight-up punk with no bullshit and the reason a lot of us got into it in the first place. I hear CÓLERA-sounding stuff on both sides of this record—on the CRIMEN DE ESTADO side it's the vocals and on the SUDOR side I hear it in the music. This is a *badass* record; get it while you can, cuz this one is gonna go fast. (MB)
(Mal Sonido)

CYANIDE PILLS – CD

I like this all right—it's an example of jaunty power-pop punk done right; think the BUZZCOCKS and the HOTLINES. The only problem I have with this is that the BRIEFS did this about 10 years ago. And the BOYS, like, 30. The line between "influence" and "rip-off" here hasn't so much as been blurred, but more blatantly over-stepped. Questionable originality aside though, being British, I do appreciate a band from the motherland giving the scene there an injection of this style of stuff as it is not as saturated there as it is here. Overall, this is a decent record and I'm sure they'd be a lot of fun live. (GG)
(Damaged Goods)

DAGGER DICKS – "Sharp for You/Razor Sharp Love"

Listen up DAGGER DICKS: Forget this band. I know you still like the STITCHES or the RIFFS or something, and think a band name like the DAGGER DICKS is somewhere near cool, but those bands suck and so does the name. So does the music. Buy PERE UBU's *The Modern Dance*, start shooting heroin, stop and I mean *stop* wearing patches (you'll thank me when you're older) and ties unless you're going to a wedding or become a mod or whatever English people do on the weekends. You're going to be embarrassed by this record in about seven months when you realize that fucking blonde chicks you met off MySpace isn't working out. I'm not trying to be a dick—you guys are probably fun to hang out with—but I can't in good conscience recommend anyone purchase this two-song neon-lime 45. Start covering "What Goes On" by the VELVETS and cut off all your hair and get off the internet. Start over. Become a baby again. Go into the womb. (BB)
(Meaty Beaty / No Front Teeth)

DAVILA 666 – "Ohhh" 12"

This early-'70s-sounding bubblegum pop/garage band from Puerto Rico turns out an album that is sweet, hand-clappy and super catchy. The melody of the first song "Ohhh" has been on repeat in my head and I am totally cool with that. Their sound is reminiscent of the Mala label, which put out records by artists like the BOX TOPS and RANDY AND THE DAYTONAS, showing some love towards later JAY REATARD mixed with Bomp stuff. The shit is sugary, down to the high-pitched Ron Dante male vocals—the dude who sang "Sugar Sugar" (a song I fucking hate) by the fictional band the ARCHIES—but I am into it. The lyrics are in Spanish about girls, love, broken hearts, etc… and there is no lack of ohhhs and ahhhs throughout. It's sorta cute (did I just say that?) and I can see making out to this. This is the first poppy album I have heard in my adult life that I like. Well done guys, you cracked me. My image is totally ruined. (MB)
(Rob's House)

DAWN OF WOLVES / TOMB STALKER – "Cemetery Wolven Ritual" split CD

Prepare to be blown away by the *evvviil!* Both of these Middle-American black metal bands play a distinctly different style of ruthless dark metal, and the pair works particularly well together on this disc considering their slight musical divergence. The recording hangs nicely at the half-hour mark—seven songs total—giving the listener enough but not too much! I was able to enjoy multiple listens without the exhaustion I often experience from contemporary metal records. The CD starts with four songs from Kentucky's TOMBSTALKER who play D-beat-influenced metal that could be an extreme extension of punk. Bands like FROM ASHES RISE, WOLFPACK/BRIGADE and AT THE GATES would give one an understanding of their approach. The riff management and song development, as well as a measured four song showing, was perfect as to not numb me as a listener and keep my attention and enthusiasm! DAWN OF WOLVES closed the split out with three dire tunes that were nearly flawless while incorporating melody, speed and technical execution. Strong showing, although at one point during a listen I convinced myself that all three songs were in fact LUDICRA tunes. Their similarities are uncanny but awesome. (RM)
(Pragmatic)

DEADSUNRISE ÷ CD

I hope I'm not taking anything away from this band by saying that they are practically the epitome of modern Scandi-crust. Heavy and dark with bellowed vocals and more than a hint of Swedish death metal. In fact, as the disc goes on they get more and more metal, leaning heavily on syncopated guitar crunch and dropping some almost sludge bits into the mix. I really appreciate what these Finns do, but it's just not necessarily my thing (I find it a bit over-produced and lacking in urgency). It's not bad though, so if you're into later DISFEAR and the like you'd probably really enjoy this. (AU)
(Several Casualties)

DEAF WISH – "Reality and Vision " LP

This is what punk rock should sound like in 2010. If you read this silly magazine, then I assume you like punk rock and you should go buy the record and find out for yourself. (MU)
(Idget Child)

THE DECAY – "This Month's Rent" CD

Before even realizing this band was from Ontario, they already reminded me of the SAINTE CATHERINES. There are also plenty of hints to RANCID and the U.S. BOMBS, for the most part this is straight-up sing-along street punk. However, there is one little oddball of a song thrown in that sounds like THIS BIKE IS A PIPE BOMB, and as the CD goes on I hear other influences from Florida, especially AGAINST ME. This album wouldn't be out of place being released by either Epitaph circa the early naughties or No Idea Records. Two worlds I never particularly saw colliding in the past, though it's nice to break things up a little from time to time, I guess... (GG)
(Juice Box)

DEEP SNAPPER – "Pi on the Side" CD

Typical dudely alternative indie rock. They've got a little bit of the weirdo vibe that Texas seems to breed, but it just comes off as slightly goofy dad rock. I'm sure it sounds like a lot of things but to me it just sounds bland. (MM)
(self-released, no info)

DILLINGER FOUR – "D4! The Bootleg" 12"

The band that comes closest to a Yank version of UK melodic pop-punk like SNUFF or LEATHERFACE. These tracks were originally broadcast on some obscure little radio station somewhere in Europe that no one ever heard, but luckily the fine

folks at Chickwithdick records found a way to license the tracks for release "Stateside" as we say Stateside. There are twenty-five tracks listed on the back of the sleeve but only four songs on the record. I'd pay big money to hear D4 run through a set list made up of the listed songs... (AM)
(Chickwithdick, no info)

D.O.A. – "Talk – Action = 0" CD

With the exception of one or two tracks on *Hardcore '81* I've never been a fan of this band, so the chances of me digging this new album are slim-to-none. Though, to be fair, I do appreciate the hard work they've put in over the years to open up the world as a touring circuit for punk bands. To be honest, the heart and punk spirit of 2010 D.O.A. is still intact and this really doesn't sound *that* much different than the material D.O.A. has produced since day one. It's still raucous spunk with a rockin' edge and political songs, only now the energy level (as one might expect) is not as high as it used to be. (JU)
(Sudden Death)

DOG SHITE – "You Can't Control My Freedom" 10"

I'm confused. Firstly, there's the stenciled cover. It looks like some kind of hip-hop demo that'd get handed out on Market Street here in San Francisco, or on Oxford Street in London, which I think is where this band is from (you try googling DOG SHITE and see if you can figure it out). Then, there are only three songs on it so a 10" is bit of a waste. Which in this age, well I'm sure you'll all agree, that is a concern... Then I go to play this puppy and there's side A, and then side AA. Hmm, all this before it's even hit the decks! And it doesn't end there—I wish it did, but it doesn't. First track: You get started off with this rockabilly, CRAMPS-influenced sound that you figure you know where it is heading, then from nowhere it goes into some female spoken/sang FALL-like business before kicking back into "Human Fly." Second track: Think of the DIRTBOMBS with a cockney Mick Collins. Not entirely bad, but bares no relevance to the previous track and thus far the only consistency this release is providing is consistent confusion. Third track: Sounds completely different to both other songs on this 10". I've found the lack of direction and sense of style this release possesses rather tiring. I need a nap... If you don't know what you like musically and enjoy being in a state of confusion, this is the 10" for you. (GG)
(Beetroot)

DRUG DRAGONS – "(I'm in a) Braingrave/Predator Weapons"

Amateurish KBD #1,239 punk that doesn't really know what it's doing, and not in that cool of a way. Over-reverbed vocals, a guitarist that can't keep up with the rest of the band, songs that don't go anywhere, a confusing and confused cover...better luck next year. (BB)
(self-released)

DURBAN POISON – "Stereophonic Tonic" CD

I'm not likely to be a member of the target audience of a band named after a strain of pot (or a band that would title a song "Electronic Blues") though I find the notion of blending dinosaur-style hard rock with NY-style punk mildly interesting. Well, now I've heard it and there's one less thing I need to do before I die. (DD)
(Shake!)

ELECTRIC DEADS – "Anti-Sex" EP

One of those legendary early-'80s bands long lost in the vortex of out-of-print-records whose reputation was fueled by their phenomenal track on *MRR*'s *Welcome to 1984* compilation LP. This long-overdue reissue of the four-song 1982 debut EP by Denmark's ELECTRIC DEADS is less blistering thrash than *1984*'s signature track, but more as if SIOUXSIE SIOUX had stepped into the lo-fi den of proto-hardcore early-'80s Europe instead of the '77 punk scene—there's a similar poppy playfulness to music as well as the well-sung female vocals. The band bangs out basic, melody-driven, new-wave-tinged punk and rudimentary hardcore that still sounds very fresh, listenable and fun, with great lyrics—"I'm anti-sex, the way you treat sex"! Recommended! (KS)
(Noise and Distortion)

ELECTRIC DEADS – "Mind Bomb" EP

The ELECTRIC DEADS' third and final EP, recorded in 1983, is their tightest and most musically developed. The band plays high-speed, melodic thrash; the guitar has a distinctive thin sound with metallic flourishes here and there, though don't be mistaken—this is 100% punk! There are some cool, catchy tracks on this record, but I really like the lyrics best—within the space of just a few lines, they address simple but profound issues (individuality, fate, the unexamined life) in a unique and interesting way. The label did a nice job on these reissues. (CS)
(Noise and Distortion)

ELECTRIC DEADS – "Order" EP

Finally a reissue of this awesome female-fronted Danish HC band's 1982 debut EP. I consider punks lucky to be able to get their hands on these tracks again! The sound is of developing hardcore with darker, melodic guitar—not the early jangley, super poppy rock'n'roll punk sound. There are dual vocals at times, but the main/female vocalist has an urgent sound of anger and controlled chaos that manages to sound sorta pretty without losing the edge. There are some new wave-ish moments, but it's all punk with heavy leanings on the hardcore. Check it out! (MB)
(Noise and Distortion)

ENDED / TOTALLY STOKED – split EP

Rad. I was not excited to review a band named TOTALLY STOKED that featured artwork resembling the opening credits of *The Simpsons* but this is actually really ripper. The riffs sound like kids who grew up listening to NIRVANA and NOFX and started a hardcore band, which potentially sounds like a shit sandwich but it's really fucking good. ENDED leans more to the slow, dismal metal riffs that speed up infinitely to slamming freakouts, heavy with just enough epicness. Close your eyes and ignore the album art—this is a fucking rager. (MM)
(self-released)

THE ENERGY – "The Energy's First Album" LP

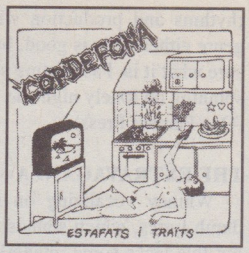
First off the ENERGY is not a good name. It's one step away from some mediocre sassy indie band from ten years ago—like the FEVER or something. Despite that hiccup, the band itself is OK; who really cares about names anyway? The ENERGY are mid-paced, reverb-leaning sonic rockers. The no-range vocals are reminiscent of an overlooked Touch and Go band. Since this band's members include people from Houston's most well-loved locals, NO TALK, SECRET PROSTITUTES, and WICKED POSEUR, I can imagine this band being a favorite there. (AL)
(Team Science)

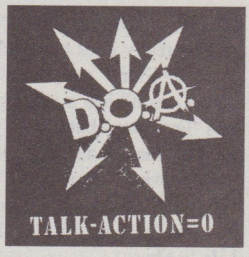
THE ERGS! – "Thrash Compactor" EP

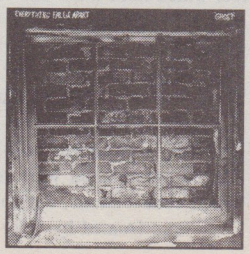
Here we have a cool little oddity record from the lovely folks at Grave Mistake and Firestarter records. I've been aware of these Jersey goofballs for some time, but never really checked them out because poppy punk isn't my thing. This one-sided 7", however, is a departure from the usual fare, compiling five short and fast songs that never made it onto their releases while they were still a band. It's catchy and a lot of fun, kinda like fellow Jersey-ites ADRENALINE O.D. Check this out. (JH)
(Grave Mistake / Firestarter)

EVERYTHING FALLS APART – "Ghost" EP

These Buffalo, NY punks play some off-kilter music on this 7", kind of like HÜSKER DÜ or even a more straightforward BEEFEATER. Maybe a less atmospheric OBSERVERS would be a more apt description. It's poppy without having a trace of pop (or its ugly bastard child pop-punk) and uses garage rock







rhythms and production without belonging to that genre either. This is good, but I'm not really entirely sure what it is. Fascinating stuff that I'll definitely be spinning on lonely nights at home. (VX)
(One Percent Press)

THE EXTRAVAGANZA – "Too Dumb to Die"

Whiney vocalizing on rudimentary songs with dumb lyrics, which sounds like a recipe for success but this lacks some intangible whatsis to rise above OK. Don't be afraid to take it over the top next time, lads. (DD)
(Mortville)

FEAR OF LIPSTICK – LP

Woah, we got a winner here. FEAR OF LIPSTICK plays straight-ahead pop-punk. Combining a good dose of TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKETS with some MARKED MEN guitar stylings, they serve up fifteen tracks of pure goodness that rivals a burrito in tastiness. An added bonus is the vocals that sound like they are from the mid-'90s band BEDFORD. This record wins the big prize. (JF)
(It's Alive)

FILTH – "Live the Chaos" EP

This really does not hold up for me as the songs "Lust for Glory" and "Hate" are, at best, filler; "Today's Lesson" has a nostalgic place in my heart as does "Freedom," but honestly I'd rather snap it in two and slash the throats of a million train-hopping crusty assholes who happen to be sporting FILTH patches and give their dogs a decent home. Maybe just add me to the fucking "List." (RR)
(Life Is Abuse)

FINAL CONFLICT – "In the Family" EP

Cool reissue of this Minneapolis hardcore band's sole four-song 1983 EP (not to be confused with the '80s SoCal group that released an LP on Pusmort). While not quite on the level of, say, STATE or MECHT MENSCH, FINAL CONFLICT nonetheless delivers a pretty f'n brutal assault—simple but solid drums lay the foundation for tough-as-nails riffs, and when the band kicks into the mid-tempo parts—you're moshing. The guitar has this cold, metallic (though not metal) sheen, perhaps due to the fact that the recording session was produced by Bob Mould. Best thing about the EP, though, is the killer throat-shredding screams by vocalist "Boneman." Nice job with the reissue overall, so definitely pick this one up. I hear there might be unreleased stuff coming out on Havoc in the future as well. (CS)
(Havoc)

FIRST BASE – "She's Boy Crazy" EP

Rough and sweet power-pop with a good ol' leathering of high-heeled glam rock splattered with a subtle hint of the 1950s. Four tunes in total, done with zip, zest and foot-tapping energy. The production dirty but not mucky, giving it a certain authentic feel which turns a not-bad record in to a damn good record. Digging. (SD)
(Play Pinball)

THE 4-SKINS – "The Return" CD

The 4-SKINS were one of the original, and undoubtedly premier Oi bands. Their two songs on the first Oi compilation were not only one of the few "new" contributions, but undoubtedly the highlight. They were fronted by Gary Hodges, who perfected the hoarse, sandpaper throat howl. Often imitated. He didn't last long, and was long gone before their first LP (and subsequent incarnations). I guess he's back, and is the only original member to appear on this disc. Of the fourteen tracks, seven are old 4-SKINS songs that'll be familiar to any fan ("Sorry," "Evil," "Jealousy," etc.) and two are SLADE covers, leaving five actual "new" songs. The reworked classics, with the exception of "Yesterday's Heroes" and "One Law for Them," sound lackluster—really like a semi-decent (but no more) cover band plodding through 'em. Considerably worse is the new material. There were always rumors back in the day of Mr. Hodges being linked with British fascist groups, and whether or not this was (or is now) the case, the following lyrics display, at best, a ridiculously racist narrow-minded insularity, and I'm trying to be generous here: "Immigrants overrun our land / Benefits office with an oustretched hand / Competing for our homes and jobs / Begging in their gypsy mobs / Our country's full, fear the worst / Shouldn't we put our own people first?" I guess it's no surprise that none of the other originals are involved with this embarrassing garbage, and that there's no UK (or American) label that's willing to put this out. We all got older, and fatter (and boy, does Mr. Evil now look fucking ridiculous—I guess embarrassingly so enough that the put his original picture from 30 years ago on the front of the album!), but fortunately, we often get wiser. Very sad, pathetic and redundant, musically and otherwise. (RK)
(Randale)

THE FUCKIN' FLYIN' A-HEADS – "Swiss Cheese Back/Watching TV"

The label that reissued this short-lived Hawaiian band's 1980 single is promoting it as "one of the more exciting links between a more typified conception of 'punk,' and that of 'noise.'" My coworker, on the other hand, calls it a "jam band" record. I suppose the truth is somewhere in between… The A-side is a loose and seriously menacing tune that plays at 33 RPM. Structure and tempo—even the mix itself—are, well…unconventional, giving the track a weird and disorienting quality. The 45 RPM flip employs a faster, driving Bonham-esque beat, layering it with echoing vocals and some wild guitar soloing. Both tracks are pretty heavily psychedelic and improvisational. While it doesn't necessarily sound like CHROME, I can see it appealing to fans of that band—it's one of those rare instances where outsider musicians who (I imagine) pre-dated punk rock were turned on by its rebellion and excitement, and created a unique hybrid sound. A fantastic single. (CS)
(De Stijl)

FUCK KNIGHTS / G-BIZ – split 12"

Two bands from Minneapolis presenting a couple of studio tracks and two live tracks. FUCK KNIGHTS are a rockabilly-ish garage band. The first song "I" is pretty catchy and upbeat with pounding drums. The second one, a cover of the GROUPIES "Primitive," is much slower and bluesy. G-BIZ is a lo-fi electronic sort of rap band. I say "sort of" since the lyrics are spoken, but not in much of a musical way. I agree with their chosen method of blasting out the vocals with bleeps and noise. We probably don't want to hear them anyway. The live songs were recorded on someone's tape recorder in the audience and sound like it—lo-fidelity complete with audience banter and applause. (CK)
(Ionik)

FUCKYOUFINGERS – "World Domination" LP

Yo, the first song on this LP fuckin' rules! It's a ridiculous mid-tempo fuckin' *anthem* somewhere between late-'80s/early-'90s NYHC and newer Lockin' Out bands—with a rap part, a sweet guitar solo *and* lyrics about only wanting to listen to early WARZONE, DYS and CHAIN OF STRENGTH! While these Swedes are obviously tongue-in-cheek and have a sense of humor, it's not a parody or joke band like I initially suspected. The rest of the tracks don't quite live up to that one—they're mostly faster, modern youth-crew-influenced tunes—but there are at least some good breakdowns, and the song "Welcome 2 Hell" is pretty awesome. Also included here is a tribute to Michael Jackson's passing called "R.I.P." ("Your funeral was fucking awesome, man") and a MOB 47 cover. (CS)
(Jaguar Trust / Boneyard)

GENERALISSIMO – "Western Medicine" CD

This band have a heap of guff on their website attempting to align their devastatingly impotent music with some kind of radical manifesto (not in the anarcho sense, but some kind of empty conceptual nonsense). They describe themselves as "high modernist broken rock," using a weird pastiche of low-level aesthetic theory that doesn't wash at all, especially when you hear the music. This is not punk to my ears, but sits somewhere close to QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE mixed with AUDIOSLAVE. Not kidding. The revolution will not be blow-dried. I would have written this off without interest if I hadn't noticed this is apparently ex-members of ANGEL HAIR. I really do wonder how such brilliant teenage bands can take their musical "careers" in this direction. The sad sea of shit that "released on iTunes" pro-websites catering to a mythical fanbase, mailing lists that no one's on and the internet rock band circuit is not where you'd hope to end up if you were once in a band as potent as that. But hey, I'm not the cops. Do what you want, but don't dirty the name of punk with this bro-rock guff. Deeply mediocre. (BP)
(Arbeit Macht Dinge)

GISM – "Document One: 1982-1984" LP

Where has the fear gone? In years past, releasing a GISM bootleg was seen as taking your life in your hands, tantamount to Sakevi-assisted suicide. Most distros wouldn't touch them with a ten-foot pole, and you certainly couldn't put your address out there for direct mailorder. How times have changed; these days, it seems like everyone has produced their own GISM boot, and Sakevi's storied vengeance is nowhere to be seen. It's a pity that he hasn't authorized any official vinyl reissues—I for one can't come close to affording the asking price for *M.A.N.*, and *SoniCRIME TheRapy* has never seen a vinyl release at all—but until he does, the bootlegs will have to do. The material here is, of course, excellent: tracks from the comps (*Great Punk Hits*, *Hardcore Unlawful Assembly*, *The Punx* and *Outsider*) along with the CD bonus tracks from *Detestation*, a live version of "Punks Is Hippies" and one track each from the side project MAMMALIA and the pseudo-side project VIVA ANGEL. The VIVA ANGEL appearance is odd; while Sakevi's alter ego Mr. Yokoyama is credited on their LP, he didn't actually perform on it at all, but was listed due to his solidarity with the band. The sound quality is very good on all the tracks, which is a plus, but when you get to the packaging it starts to fall apart. For starters, on the track listing *The Punx* tape

is listed as *The Punk*, the *Outsider* LP appears as *Outsided* and the classic song "Punks Is Hippies" shows up as "Punk Is Hippies." While these typos may be nods in the direction of crappy '80s bootlegs, it seems more likely that they are, in fact, just ordinary typos. Either way, these amateur-hour mistakes are very annoying. Some of the images on the sleeve look pretty pixilated as well. It really looks like a rush job, and there are no lyrics or information anywhere. I can't help but compare this to the excellent GISM (and other Japanese hardcore) bootlegs put out by the mysterious folks behind Absolute Power. Theirs always have copious liner notes, detailed information on all the releases they're taken from, high-quality images, thick vinyl—the works. This is pretty shoddy in comparison. But, at the end of the day, it's a GISM bootleg with decent sound quality, and you're going to buy it anyway. I already did months ago, and I'm the one who just wasted 20 minutes bitching about it. (VX)
(bootleg, no info)

GLAM – "Duelo de Titanes" EP

I'm scared to review a record like this because I know no matter how much I praise it, my words won't live up to how great the record is—but here goes. From the drop of the needle the tension is set, and an unrelenting blast is unleashed and it goes straight for the throat. This is so ferocious it just bludgeons and crushes you from the eardrums down to the soul. It is such a devastating monster with six blistering songs in like five minutes, it leaves one in awe. The immense power, desperation and soul in this platter just seething with hate, misery, loathing, and contempt is a force to be reckoned with and offers a glimmer of hope in an world of despair. Do oneself a favor and snag this before it's gone as it's honestly one of the best records in ages, containing a hodgepodge mix of the best raw hardcore punk from the past 30 years. (RR)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

GNARLY LOVE – "The Long and Gnarly Road" CD

No. Nope. Uh-uh. No, no, no. It's a "Y Be Normal" version of that new D.O.A. CD I just reviewed. Imagine if the DARVOCETS were pre-WEEN or THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS, like, before they tasted success. The artwork is of the early-'90s alternative/artist girl's puffpaint-on-her-backpack variety. Freak music, for sure. (JU)
(Eugene)

THE GOODNIGHT LOVING – "The Goodnight Loving Supper Club" CD

It is unfathomable that this band could actually be wimpier than their name implies. Yet they are. It's not just the wimpiness—I don't mind wimpy occasionally when done right—the GOODNIGHT LOVING is also so nice and clean. "Hey, look us. Aren't we cute?" My god, there is nothing in the least bit rock'n'roll about this music. It is so unthreatening. Mom-approved. It is pop music with a country tinge and quaint, earnest lyrics. It is well played and I am sure they are really nice guys. (CK)
(Dirtnap)

GREEDY MISTRESS – "A Compulsive Need of You" CD

Self-proclaimed "sexploitation rock" from Italy. Mediocre hard rock punk with retarded lyrics. Maybe this will appeal to all the eleven-year-old boys who have just seen their first *Playboy*. Growing up would be a good start here, but then you're still left with the crappy music. (RL)
(Point Break Society)

GUN OUTFIT – "Possession Sound" LP

The second full-length from Olympia, WA trio GUN OUTFIT is an improvement on their previous 12". The band's other recorded output is definitely enjoyable, but until now they've been what I've chalked up to a live band—though I've only seen them one time. To an extent that might still the case; their live set is astonishingly dynamic. All the same, *Possession Sound* is quiet a step forward for the guitar-centric group. It's sophisticated and finite—the entirety of the album sounds purposeful and well thought out, not just thrown together. No "fuck it, this will do"s here. This album is without a doubt a lovingly whole and finished product. Somewhere between SONIC YOUTH and DINO JR worship there is a subtler notch on that scale that GUN OUTFIT fits into with tag-team droney male and velvet female vocals. Completely beautiful and driven, for my money, *Possession Sound* is a great rock record for this year. (AL)
(Post Present Media)

HARD-ONS – "Alfalfa Males Once Summer Is Done Conform or Die" CD

The HARD-ONS are an Australian band that has been together more or less since the '80s. This is a CD of new material; on it the band is schizophrenic, flipping between pop-punk and metallic thrash. They seem to be entertaining themselves. Good for them. (CK)
(Boss Tuneage)

HARDTIMES – "Life Is a Battlefield" CD

There a lot of things the French are damn good at—pissing off Americans being their number one and making great Oi records their second. HARDTIMES keep the flag flying with some loud and proud anti-racist skinhead rock. It's big, bold and loud, coming off as the ANGELIC UPSTARTS having a ruck with the WORKING STIFFS. God bless French Oi. (SD)
(UVPR)

HAYMAKER – 12"

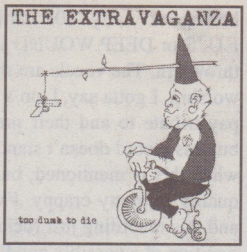
I think this is HAYMAKER's demo pressed on wax, but there's no info available on the record, so I can't say for sure. Either way, it's nasty and brutal hardcore from Hamilton, Ontario. I don't know if they're still a band, but as of a few years ago, they had a reputation for violent, over-the-top shows in a GORDON SOLIE fireworks-and-chain-swinging type of way. The songs themselves are hateful, heavy, fast and kinda tuneless. All the right ingredients for a big, crazy bar brawl. (JH)
(RSR)

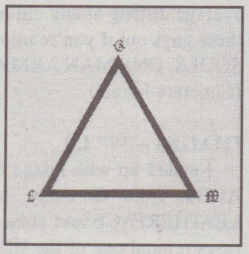
HAYMAKER – 12"

Fuck, listening to this rager of a 12" makes me *really* regret the fact that HAYMAKER canceled their 2005 US tour with LACK OF INTEREST. Since as best I know they only ever played live in Canada, the unlucky majority of us who don't happen to live in those fabled northern-ish lands have had to make do with their recorded output. I've owned the LP, the EPs and the splits for quite some time, but this vinyl pressing of their legendary 1999 demo marks the final piece in my collection, as well as the final nail in the coffin of a several-years-dead band. Allegedly there are fewer than two hundred copies of the original tape out there, and possibly even less, so it isn't one of those unnecessary re-releases of material everyone already has. The dozen tracks on this one-sided 12" exemplify exactly what hardcore should be: ugly, brutish and short. Come to think of it, that's how Thomas Hobbes described pre-civilized life; well, any traces of the civilized veneer most of us use to mask the animal within are stripped away by the sheer audacious violence and undisguised misanthropy of the music here. HAYMAKER's place in hardcore can be traced in a direct lineage of influences from GISM and LIP CREAM to NINE SHOCKS TERROR, H100S and GORDON SOLIE MOTHERFUCKERS straight through to LEFT FOR DEAD, with whom one of the band members previously played. Aside from musical influences, this list also gives you an idea of the legendary levels of chaotic violence to be found at one of their live performances, up to and including a bonfire on the dance floor in one legendary instance. This shouldn't be too hard to find a copy of, but even if it takes some serious time and effort it's absolutely worth it. (VX)
(RSR)

HIGH LIFE – "Oceanside Blues" EP

The latest installment from HIGH LIFE. What we have is





homage to early-'80s hardcore in the vein of the F.U.'S or DEEP WOUND with lots of chorus vocals thrown in. The vocals are that snotty brand of VOID worship. I gotta say, I am a big fan of the bands they pay tribute to and their previous records are swell, but this record doesn't stand out to me. I usually hate when this is mentioned, but seriously, the recording quality is pretty crappy. I've heard their other stuff and this recording just fucks it all up beyond the recognition of a possibly good record. The lyrics are stupid, but that is exactly what they are going for. Life is just one big homoerotic party for these boys and somehow I am not jealous. While the prospect of seeing this much dick might be promising to some, the sound of this record is simple: a deep down bro need to hump each other, which leaves this lady in the cold. I can guarantee that I can out fight, out fuck and out drink these kids, but what the hell, we all had to learn somehow. The cover is a NIGEL PEPPERCOCK ripoff with a dude that looks like he is packing no damage, but he has some sweet faux-kleys on. (MB)
(Inkblot)

THE HOLLOWPOINTS – "Old Haunts on the Horizon" CD

This band is a bit of a guilty-pleasure for me... They're kind of wimpy sounding, but not in a bad way 'cuz they're so damn good! It's catchy and melodic, upbeat punk-rock that verges on pop, with a solid rhythm section that thumps along and fat crunchy guitars full of killer leads throughout. Matty's vocals verge on whiney but not quite so as to sound urgent and sincere (unlike that wussy crap from bands like AFI that just makes you wanna punch Davey Havoc!!). The HOLLOWPOINTS are a hard-working band of good guys that can hold their own with the Hot Topic crowd, but just as easily kick it with your average dirtbag at any old hall or bar show... Check these guys out if you're into things like BOUNCING SOULS, ONE MAN ARMY, etc. (ML)
(Concrete Jungle)

IMAGES – "V" LP

I ended up with mixed feelings on this one. IMAGES, from Germany, have gruff singing like LEATHERFACE and sometimes the sweeping choruses remind one of the HOT WATER MUSIC-style Gainesville shit. Most of their material is hard-hitting, like a band influenced by hardcore but not wanting to be "limited" to a scene of degenerates who hate society. The lyrics are in English, poetic and obscure. This LP has some strong tracks, like "Under the Crescent," a few that come close but are let down by a weak interlude or chorus (like the last song), and a few that are too close to commercial acceptability. (JM)
(Phobiact)

IN DISGUST / P.L.F. – split CD

After reviewing the KILL THE CLIENT/THOUSANDSWILLDIE split, I'm having trouble coming up with words for these two grindcore bands. I really like both, and these might be the best tracks yet from IN DISGUST. Their eleven tracks rage, grind, change and get chaotic in a modern version of old NAPALM DEATH. "Mask of Reason" is a perfect example; the track goes from mid-paced, feedback-laden grindcore into a chugging grind, then fast with screaming vocals back to the chugging grind. You can hear that they've listened to early grindcore but haven't just copied it—instead they have their own take. I'm surprised how much I love their tracks. PRETTY LITTLE FLOWER has been around for more than ten years now and has a slight death metal sound, including more guttural vocals, but it's still straight-ahead grindcore. Pick this CD up. (MH)
(RSR)

INJ/SYS – "Spoken Word" EP

Fast hardcore with a heavy emphasis on early NY and Boston hardcore à la NEGATIVE FX. Unfortunately, the only memorable songs here are the ANTIDOTE and ABUSED covers. (JH)
(No Reprieve)

INTER ARMA – "Sundown" LP

Forcefield is the same label that put out the phenomenal INFERNAL STRONGHOLD full-length, so I definitely had some high hopes for this LP. Unfortunately, those hopes were dashed by the end of the first track. INTER ARMA hails from Richmond, VA and plays Southern-style sludge mixed with post-rock, crust and metal influences. Most post-rock doesn't do too much for me, and it definitely doesn't work for me here, and the metal part of the equation is...bland. It's just "metal"; not "black metal" or "death metal" or "heavy metal," just the sort of generic "metal" that Relapse Records shits out by the ton. None of the riffs really fit together, the whole thing is massively overproduced and I'm left cold after listening to this all the way through. I wish that punks trying to play metal would listen to more BLASPHEMY, SADISTIK EXEKUTION and NECROVORE and less MASTODON, NILE and PANTERA. (VX)
(Force Field / Mirror Universe)

THE JADE WALKERS – "Tall Boy Mob" EP

Four tracks of generic, female-fronted rock'n'roll released by the interestingly named Puta Records. I'd not heard of this label until now and they are, unsurprisingly, based in NYC. I was also equally unsurprised by them listing Crypt, HoZac and Bomp! as label influences. So, if you're looking for a better idea of how this sounds than "generic, female-fronted rock'n'roll," think of some of the lesser releases of the aforementioned labels and you'll be headed in the right direction. I'm sure they'd be, like, totally awesome live, in smeared eye make-up (both the boys and the girls), red lippy and torn fishnets in some club that is as stinky as the attitudes that fill it, if you like that sort of thing. But I don't... (GG)
(¡Puta!)

JAILHOUSE FUCK – "New TV" 10"

Whoa. This is really good. Really fucking heavy. Really driving. If you ever fantasized about MIKA MIKO finding some unquenchable rage and becoming a sludge metal band, than you have fucking arrived. The second side starts out with forest sounds that brought to mind *Twin Peaks* and then came charging out with a rolling bass and pummeling drums that had me sweating in anticipation for the vocals to kick in. Seriously so raging and so heavy. Fucking amazing. (MM)
(Clan Destine / Lazy Roar)

JUDAS – "Dictator" EP

Back in 2007, this California power-violence band released a demo that was put out on vinyl the same year. Three years have passed, and their second release is just seeing the light of day: a one-sided 7", and a 45 RPM one at that. Expect an LP around Christmas 2037. At least this was worth the wait, with four songs of absolutely crushing hardcore and one of thick, sludgy doom. These guys cover NOOTHGRUSH live and their guitarist has a seriously unhealthy INFEST fixation, so that should give you some idea of what to expect here. Sandro RSR has provided some fantastic packaging, with a screened foldout sleeve befitting the music inside. All in all a fantastic release, well worth going out of your way to pick up. (VX)
(RSR)

JUNIOR BATTLES – "Basements" EP

Interesting 45 here from the Great White North's JUNIOR BATTLES. The A-side reminds me of a combination of LATTERMAN mixed with fellow countrymen the PAPERBACKS. What I basically mean is that it sounds like that it should have shout-along vocals, but instead has almost indie, 2000-era emo vocal harmonies. The B-side has a more straight-ahead, melodic, late-era JAWBREAKER sound that reminds me of the things that used to come out on the Crackle label, like TRAVIS CUT. Good stuff. (JF)
(Square Up)

KANSALAISTOTTELEMATTOMUUS – "Sota Poliisia Vastaan" EP

Straight-ahead anarchist punk from Finland. Not sure I've liked a straight-ahead punk record this much in a while. Pretty much every song is a throw-your-first-in-the-air anthem. One of their tracks is about one of my favorite topics—crusty punks who say they are into animal rights but who treat their dogs like shit. Fuck them. The band sounds a bit like a Finnish OI POLLOI. Wow. (MH)
(Worst-Case Scenario)

KELLERASSELN – "Fleißig Gründlich Gewissenhaft" – LP

This is the latest release from this German three-piece that's been around since '95. I love the vocals. Think DERANGED DICTION (Tom Kipp era, which sounds like CRUCIFUCKS meets VOID). *Be aware that I am talking about the vocals only*. The music is an interesting mix of '80s hardcore with some blast-beats and some definite hints of modern crust. While it's isn't always my taste, these guys definitely don't give a shit about what we think about their sound. The band did not write an album with the intention of having one theme—I know the current "mysterious guy" and "confused guy" hardcore trends are all about the "concept album" these days, and while that shit is rad, it's cool to hear a band that is adventurous and creative. The lyrics are sung in German and the record includes a booklet with English translations and explanations. They are very political in nature and while they have some good insights, much of it seems oversimplified and preachy to me. If you are a political band, you open yourself up to that scrutiny, but how thorough can a punk record really be? (MB)
(SM-Musick / Truemmer Pogo / Kotzbrocken)

KILL THE CLIENT / THOUSANDSWILLDIE – split EP

Two of my current favorite grindcore bands; sadly THOUSANDSWILLDIE is no more. This is the first release from KILL THE CLIENT since their amazing 2008 full-length *Cleptocracy* and I was curious if they would be as good. Simply, yes—the three tracks twist and turn in a grindcore rage. Wait, does that make sense? KILL THE CLIENT is slightly techy

grindcore but it's the song structures that are complicated. They don't play flashy, sweep-picking techy stuff; they harness the chaos of political/social rage perfectly. THOUSANDSWILLDIE from Oakland, CA have a noisier, chaotic grindcore sound. These tracks come close to capturing their quick, chaotic live sets. An excellent split release. (MH)
(RSR)

KUZLE – "Se Pomnite Tovarisi?" CD

These are new recordings from a classic '80s Yugoslavian punk band. This style is not really something I know that much about, but I will give it a go. It has a melodic street-punk feel, with gruff vocals and a guitar sound reminiscent of old French Oi bands. They have some gypsy punk songs and a ska inflected one, too. I have not listened to their '80s work, so I have nothing to compare it to in terms of their sound now and then. I guess they made this because they were unable to record these songs to this standard in the early '80s, which on one hand is cool, that they are in the position to revisit their youth, but on the other hand… I understand wanting to make your music sound the way you heard it in your head, but didn't have the equipment or resources to make it actually happen in your youth. But I *like* punk raw and fucked up—made under difficult circumstances, it sounds desperate and necessary, like it *had* to happen. (LG)
(Dallas)

LACKEY DIE – "Get Rich Plan" EP

This EP documents eight tracks recorded in 1984 and 1985 by the previously unknown LACKEY DIE ("Charlottesville's first hardcore band"). Decent early US hardcore that's pretty generic/derivative albeit in a charming kind of way. LACKEY DIES had a cool guitar sound (half the tracks were recorded by Don Zientara at Inner Ear), good vocals and some catchy riffs. It won't put Charlottesville on the map as an undiscovered source of classic HC, but for the early-'80s fans and completists it's good for a couple spins. Includes two inserts with lyrics, a band history and brief interview. (CS)
(Feel It)

LAHAR / STOLEN LIVES – split LP

A split LP between two similar Czech bands deep in crossover/crossback territory with segmented, metallic pummeling, riffage and solos. CONCRETE SOX always comes to mind with this style, but it's more in step with the new wave of flipped-up baseball cap and denim patch jacket metal punk, and it's no surprise the creepy cover is by MUNICIPAL WASTE/Tankcrimes artist-in-residence Andrei Bouzikov. LAHAR is the faster and maybe tighter (in a metal sense) of the two bands, with spewed vocals spread over a torrent of throttling drums, squealing riffs and pummeling breakdowns. STOLEN LIVES similarly charges with quick riffs, dropped solos, galloping drums and crunchy breaks delivered on the punker, sloppier side of tech speed metal, with urgent shouts that bring to mind fellow Czech legends SEE YOU IN HELL. Lyrics of both bands are environmentally conscious, pro-animal, about life's independence and anti-government—then both bands close out their sides with INFEST covers! Cool split. (KS)
(Insane Society)

LA LA VASQUEZ – "Homelines" EP

The first side is like a less frantic MAGIC JOHNSON but rambling towards the RAINCOATS; the second side meanders closer towards BRILLIANT COLORS territory but it's all got a touch of desperate sadness. This is staring-out-the-window-at-rainy-days or riding-your-bike-on-a-sunny-day-type music—the soundtrack to the kind of solitude that's sad but comforting at the same time. It's all fuzzy in the classic Captured Tracks style along with multiple girl voices and garage tinges (just barely). Really, really good. (MM)
(Captured Tracks)

LAMPS – "The Role of the Dogcatcher in African American Urban Folklore/Salvation Road"

Back with another single, Monty Buckles returns with more scuzzy greatness. A deceptively quiet start launches into an ear-bending cymbal clatter and beating mess then back again to a shoulder-wagging, finger-tapping, snotty and sassy number. It goes back and forth, in and out, playing with the listener in a completely infectious way. The flip is a driving reverbed bopper rendition of the KINKS' "Salvation Road" but it's still blatantly all LAMPS. Two short and sweet songs are over quickly. Monty knows how to make an entrance and leave you wanting more, but not like you got cheated. (AL)
(Fan Death)

LAST UNDER THE SUN – "Gone" CD

Brit "peace-punks" (or what I'm guessing passes for peace-punk these days), with a singer who sounds uncannily like the PROPAGANDHI dude. Musically, they draw from the likes of ANTISECT and NEUROSIS (post-thrash), with a healthy dose of melody and the occasional acoustic guitar. 'Tis a bit droney and repetitive for me, but there are flashes of a good tune in there, too! Very well executed for fans of that kind of thing. (RK)
(Iron Man)

LEMON DOTS – "Girl in Motion" EP

This is the exact type of music that I find incredibly embarrassing. Simple and safe in every aspect with inane rhyming lyrics about boys sung in a cute harmonizing way. This is entirely about being sanitary and saccharine. Oh, and basically every song sounds exactly the same. There are hints of feedback on the last song on the second side but it's nowhere near enough to make it interesting. (MM)
(Labor of Love)

LORD FESTER – "Welcome to My House" 12"

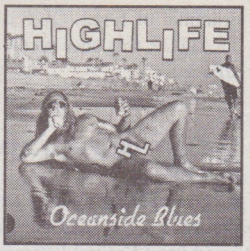
I bet all their girlfriends dress like Betty Page and when "Folsom Prison Blues" comes on everyone in the room goes silent with reverence. This isn't a terrible record, bearing in mind I am speaking as someone who is not really inclined towards French rockabilly. But the lyrics are corny, super schlocky daddy hot-rod blues baby shit, and the music sounds like it should be on a TV movie about a '50s rock'n'roll band rather than music that an actual rock'n'roll band woulda made. If you have a cherry or rolling dice tattoo, this is probably right up your alley. (LG)
(TAF, no info)

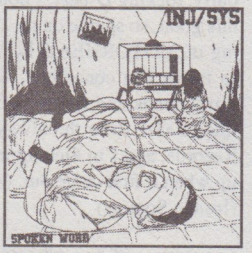
LOUIS LINGG AND THE BOMBS – "Hate Your Laws" EP

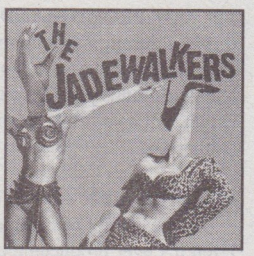
Boo ya! This is what I am talking about! LOUIS LING AND THE BOMBS play political lefty punk music that makes this old fat punker dance around the room. Some pop-punk, some garage and some '70s influences make this one fun slab of 7" vinyl. If I had to draw a comparison it would be with Swedish band RANDY during their *Human Atom Bombs* phase, which also happens to be one of my favorite records of the past decade. Fuck, this is great! The only thing that stops it from being a perfect EP is that all the songs appear to be on their new CD, too. But that baby ain't on vinyl. (JF)
(Damaged Goods)

LOWTALKER – "People Worry About Everything" 10"

LOWTALKER plays HOT-WATER-MUSIC-inspired tunes. They consist of members of MISERY SIGNALS and COME-BACK KID—two groups that are not eligible to be in this mag due to major label affiliations. LOWTALKER has the same management company as the aforementioned. Bands with management companies suck. Bands that put their management company's logo really large on their MySpace page suck even more. If you want to go hear good HOT-WATER-MUSIC-inspired tuneage, I suggest checking out the Kiss of Death or A.D.D. labels as well as No Idea—not from some shitty label operated by the







drummer of FALL OUT BOY (yes I know RACE-TRAITOR was once on the cover). Fucking bullshit! (JF)
(FC666)

LYCANTHROPHY / MALIGNANT TUMOR – split EP

I've been assured by several people who are "in the know" that LYCANTHROPY is the best new grind band I'm not listening to, so I was quite interested to hear this reissue of an old split of theirs… and holy shit is it good. It's rooted in good old *Scum* but with sick precise breaks and fantastic vocal trade-offs that remind me of the best of SPAZZ. Zdisha's vocals are so high-pitched and pissed it's almost surreal (reminds me of the VOMIT PUNX, if anybody remembers that band). Nice LIMP WRIST cover, too! Fantastic, and I'm going to have to do some serious shopping for this band's stuff now. I haven't heard a lot of grind that really held my attention lately (with a big exception for PRETTY LITTLE FLOWER's recent face-melting San Francisco set!), but LYCANTRHOPY definitely do it for me. On the flip, the long-running MALIGNANT TUMOR drops some burly, rocking D-beat. I don't recall them being quite this good, so shame on me, I guess. The blatant stealing of MOTÖRHEAD licks only adds to the appeal as far as I'm concerned. A rock-solid split for both grind fiends and crusty rock'n'roll fanatics. Another fine release from the always-reliable Insane Society Records, and I'm kicking myself for not picking this up when it first came out. (AU)
(Insane Society)

MAKER – "I-91" CD EP

A four-song EP from this East Coast band that sounds a lot like first-LP TAKING BACK SUNDAY and early PROPAGHANDI. Up-tempo and catchy, this is a decent start quality-wise although there are tons of groups doing this now and the biggest problem is it sounds just like other bands. I'm sure a full-length will be a better test but I do like this. (RL)
(Either/Or)

MARKED MEN – "On/The Other Side"

How can I not be completely biased about this 7"? Even if I ever produced a child, I'm not sure I could love it more than I love the MARKED MEN. It's rare to get one stellar songwriter in a band, and in Mark Ryan and Jeff Burke this band has two. I don't know whether to swoon or just be insanely jealous of them and their talent. Anyway enough gush, for now. The Jeff track ("The Other Side") comes complete with a trademark sweeping anthemic feel, a perfect pop breakdown and hook that'll have me singing "You're not tough enough…" on my walk home (or at least I think that is what he's saying, you can never quite tell with Jeff). The Mark track ("On") gives this 7" another true-to-form punch of pop, a little harder and slightly more disjointed than it's neighbor. A track that shoots bullets at your feet, demanding that you dance to it! Or maybe that's just me, me and my righteous MARKED MEN stiff. Both of these songs are classic examples of this band's abilities and if you like them already you will not be disappointed. If you've not listened to them before (what's wrong with you?) and you like solid, clever punk rock songwriting with melody and both balls and heart, you will like this. Grab this while you can—it may be one of their last releases. (GG)
(540 Records)

MASAKARI – "The Profit Feeds" LP

This is heavy, kinda crusty metallic hardcore that has a lot of Japanese-style leanings in the chord progressions but also some cool sludgier moments. It's definitely heavy with modern colossal production. There's a melancholic feel to it, akin to the pioneers of this genre TRAGEDY and HIS HERO IS GONE. Lots of bands go for this sound and many of them are really good players, they do it well, etc., but the epic approach to songwriting sometimes has a real saccharine effect (which I can sometimes dig but it depends on the day). There are some killer riffs on this record and the song arrangements are pretty dynamic and cool. The vocals rest pretty perfectly in the mix. They're pretty non-descript but fit the music perfectly. This record actually reminds me a bit of the DESOLATION LP, but mostly in the Japanese-style sections of songs. Maybe it's also because the artwork is done by Sugi! Heavy stuff! (DB)
(Halo of Flies)

MAYDAY – "Illegal Alien" EP

For some reason I've been avoiding reviewing this since it was assigned me, mainly because the hand-drawn cover looks like it could be a middling crust record. False! The songs on this 7" caught me off guard to the point where I burnt the tortilla I was warming and nearly set the *MRR* house on fire. Yeah, that good. These are my jams on so many levels. It starts with a totally indulgent, extended tight surf guitar intro which is a song in and of itself, then heads straight into "Illegal Alien vs. Child Predator" which recalls GORILLA ANGREB in terms of mournful chord progressions, while the pace of the whole song reminds me a lot of the RED DONS' first LP. The B-side starts out like it could be "Aloha Steve and Danno" by RADIO BIRDMAN leading into Melody and Gac doing a killer vocal trade-off just like the REZILLOS. The main vocalist in this band, whose name is Melody (clever parents must have anticipated they had a crooner par excellence on their hands) has a ripper of a voice—throaty and soulful, snide and caustic, high-pitched and dominating the fuck out of this record. *Yes!* Gac has a really cool voice too that reminds me a lot of Fred Schneider from the B-52'S. I hate comparisons though and this is in and of itself a brilliant single, I do kind of wish they'd skipped the intro for room to put another banger on here though! Get it. (BP)
(Feral Kid)

MAYFLOWER – "Second Best Sunsets" LP

I'm gonna be honest and admit that I don't really know that much about or get where these guys are coming from in regards to their influences or their peers, but I do really like what I hear on this album!! I have heard a lot of OFF WITH THEIR HEADS recently and had a chance to see them live this past year and they are really great. So considering that OFF WITH THEIR HEADS is one of the bands that these guys are compared to, that bodes well for MAYFLOWER and I'd have to say that I agree with that comparison… The music is mid- to up-tempo and relatively simple albeit solid—the thing that stands out are the vocals, which are strong and gruff with brash lyrics that are a cut above the average banal subject matter and usually witty and scathing. This shit is for punks with a brain, but can still be enjoyed for anyone just looking for a good party! (ML)
(Kiss of Death)

MATTHEW MELTON – "Still Misunderstood" LP

MATTHEW MELTON from SNAKEFLOWER 2, BARE WIRES and RIVER CITY TANLINES delivers his solo recording thing where he does it all: drums, guitar and vocals. Catchy lo-fi pop with garage and classic rock tinges. It's nice, but a bit too nice. (CK)
(Southpaw)

MENTOS COCA / PINK ROSE – split 10"

Before I even give this a listen for the first time, I feel that I have to mention the packaging. This is one of those records that come in a hand-sewn, silk-screened cloth cover. Inside I find a piece of cardboard with stencils in paint on either side, a beautifully printed lyrics booklet and, of course, a 10" slab of vinyl. Now, judging by this packaging, I would assume that this is screamo at best, folk punk garbage at worst. This is one case where my assumptions should have been let at the door, since the two French bands on this split both play pretty fucking raging crust punk. I have to say that PINK ROSE is not a name I would normally associate with the crustier side of punk rock, but they definitely have some serious chops, and probably at least one dread mullet between them. On the flipside, MENTOS COCA destroys as well, and if one of them doesn't have an ass-flap on their Carhartts I'll eat my (non-existent) hat. All in all this is a pretty great record. Up the French crust punx! (VX)
(I Feel Good / Noise Not Bombs / Undislessed / Asso Domi / etc.)

MIHOEN! / SEEIN RED – "Kots Op Nederland" split 10"

This is what I'm talking about! MIHOEN! brings the fucking catchy, hyperfast thrash which measures up to stalwarts BETERCORE and OLHO DE GATO. I was into them before, and this record is even better. Now, SEEIN RED… Praises due, but I keep waiting for a record that's gonna hit as hard as their mid-'90s material, exemplified by their impossibly crucial split 7"s with STACK and OPSTAND. After hearing too many releases where I suspected the songs had been written at the recording session (not unlike the substandard SPAZZ splits), I had, um, switched my focus to other artists. While these dudes can't touch MIHOEN!, this stuff is better than say, their split 10" with CATWEAZLE. If you don't know, SEEIN RED has been around for fucking 30 years, playing straightforward fast hyper-political hardcore almost the whole time. (They had some mid-tempo stuff about ten years in when they switched the band's name from LÄRM.) I think MIHOEN! shares my sentiments 'cuz they cover two SEEIN RED tracks from the above mentioned crucial splits. The copies of this record received here at *MRR* contain no insert at all, which is disappointing and unusual. It took a true student of the genre to even figure out which side was which! I do believe that part of the reason, as with SEEIN RED's *Trefwoord Punk* 7", is that the songs deal with Dutch politics, and the bands see this information as irrelevant outside of Holland. The cover is a photomontage of what I suspect are right-wing Dutch politicians, and I further speculate that *Kots* in an insulting term. (*Op Nederland* is "Over Holland" in English, but *Kots* isn't in my dictionary.) Anyway, get this record for MIHOEN!, but SEEIN RED ain't bad. (JM)
(Opiate / Trabuc / Tadpole)

MILLIONS OF THEM – "Failures" LP

Belgium might have another feather for its hat! Waffles, chocolate, beer and now hardcore!? Although the BOTCH comparison is *absolutely necessary*, and a bit disappointing, *Failures* stands on its own as a fucking scorcher of a record! Mixed by Kurt "everything I touch is fucking gold" Ballou and released by Europe's top-notch Adagio830 Records, MILLIONS OF THEM pump out a dynamic, heavy (!) and extremely well played release. Start to finish, he record has each musical component synchronized in perfect chaos, somehow threaded together in what seems to be a gnarly accident. But no accident, holy smokes! Think about blown-out and up-front vocals sharing your attention with an unpredictable, frantic and seriously incredible guitar that leads you all over the damn place. This backed by staunch bass-lines with enough presence to hold down something similar to a melody for the drums to fall into time with between fills, crashes and bangs. A real winner here, take notice. (RM)
(Adagio830)

MIND ERASER / SLANG – split EP

I can't even exactly tell you why, but MIND ERASER has never really appealed to me. The way they approach grind seems to be more from the mosh-metal side (a genre that's never really done much for me), and while I appreciate how pissed the vocals are, some of the transitions are a little off and to me these two tracks just don't hit the spot. I know they have legions of fans, so just stick me in the unconverted column for now. SLANG, on the other hand, are just my cup of tea. Gruff, fast and uncompromising Japanese hardcore in the style of a more metallic NIGHTMARE or CRUDE. Their song just flies by and definitely leaves me wanting more. This and another SLANG split (with WORLD BURNS TO DEATH) was pressed for a US tour. I hope you caught them when they came to your town! (AU)
(540 Records)

MIND SPIDERS – "World's Destroyed" EP

"Solo pop explorations courtesy of Mark Ryan of the Marked Men"—well, that takes care of my job. I'll add that the songs bring the BOX ELDERS to mind, and that's all right by me! (DD)
(Dirtnap)

MING TORO – "Black Rat" CD

Slightly dodgy new wave from Rhode Island, overproduced for what it is. There's some rock bro wailing in a way I can only describe as reminiscent of a castrated Eddie Vedder. Not very charming. The other songs are more jangly and have some interesting synthy business going on, and also involve something call an "Aetherphone." Fourth-rate RADIO 4 or PAPERCHASE maybe? This is slightly menacing—which is cool to begin with—but like, slightly menacing as in a dude on the bus being a bit weird so you just move up to the many available other seats where you can't smell him, and get on with your day. (BP)
(Bucket Republic)

MORAL DILEMMA – "Under Surveillance" EP

Damn! I just got smacked in the face by the first song on this EP! Actually, it's the first song on side B called "Your Decadence Will Be Our Descent" because I just realized that I put the record on backwards, but damn, it's still a scorcher! Along with the actual first songs on the A-side, this is some pretty good, raging punk rock! I'm usually not a huge fan of "screamo" type vocals, but this combination of male/female lead vocals trading off are a winning combination! They are aggressive as hell without losing the actual melody, and with the backing music comprised of driving guitars, a solid rhythm section and peppered with nice guitar leads and killer bass runs, I really like this! The only dip on this EP is the last song, which is a total departure from the rest, starting off slowly and sung in French—it sounds like a punk-rock gypsy folk-song and if I actually listened to GOGOL BORDELLO, I'd guess that this sounds like that… My favorite song is still the first song on side B by far though, and this one alone gives the EP a big thumbs up from me!! (ML)
(Pumpkin)

NEIFENBACH – "Reason Will Falter" CD

Galway's NEIFENBACH present this full-length CD in a beautifully dyed (or screened?) heavy cardboard casing, keeping the aesthetic minimal yet appealingly punk as shit. Simple, elegant and to the point, which is not far from the seven-song musical offering. The overall sound is heavy and melodic, giving us thick guitar riffs with gruff vocals to compliment tracks that border on melodic post-punk and moshable hardcore. Reaching for references, I think NEIFENBACH create a record closer to that of Germany's TRAINWRECK but not without tempered interference by the likes of a band like INTEGRETY. While avoiding the boring and/or predictable tough and hard nuances of this type of hardcore, NEIFENBACH drench the listener in energy and sincerity. These songs would compliment a roster not unlike that of COMADRE, TRAINWRECK and crushers MALADIE. (RM)
(self-released, no info)

NEON BLUD – "Whipps" EP

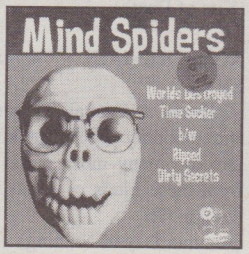
Ding-dong-delighted to see these demo tracks released on 7", after missing out on the cassette due to Youth Attack-related hyper-buy-scene-ia, if you catch my drift. I have been sentenced to jamming a badly dubbed set of these songs (perhaps indicative of the downside of small vibrant scenes getting spotlighted internationally, as Tampa, FL undoubtedly has). However, now that mysterious guy hardcore has been usurped by CONFUSE-d GAI hardcore (N.B. I can't take credit for that incredible pun) as the sound du jour, even the most hype-averse can come out from behind their hands. Yes, be warned: overlook this particular band at your peril. If you're listening at the back, what I'm saying is that this is members of CULT RITUAL and SLAVESCENE, but it's different, new and really quite exciting. Opening with a (deliberately?) disorientating blast of vocal noise that comes off like an irate voicemail, the feedbackular fuzztones lurch into loopy riffs, suddenly veering towards a more identifiably hardcore (of the blown-out and frantic) approach which reminds me in places of SWING KIDS, then just when you're nodding along shit gets weird again and starts to fall apart in the endlessly pleasing way you might anticipate when listening to VOID. Samantha's vocals are super cool, snotty and bratty in an unforced way that really kicks this record up a notch for me. All song titles contain either "Neon" or "Blud." It's all wrapped up with a clever lyrics sheet and silk-screened cover. Get this while it's still available. (BP)
(Fan Death)

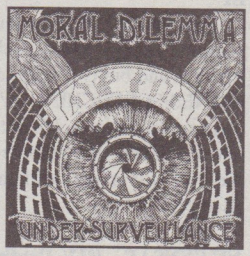
NERVE CITY – "Sleepwalker" 12"

This could be the soundtrack to a Thomas Campbell surf movie—it's got that retro-tinged twangy beatnik surfer guitar mythology. NERVE CITY is a one-man band so technically this shoulda gone to Caroline Keddy, but upon reflection maybe this is too wimpy for her? If you are a fan of more recent TY SEGALL, this will probably already be in your record collection… It really does just sound like some sort of new-era HoZac-endorsed version of an old Bruce Brown movie like *Ride the Wild Surf*. (LG)
(Sacred Bones)

NERVESKADE – "Insanity/Forced to Live"

Holy. Shit. Once again this band schools us with some blown-out, noisy yet tight UK-styled madness. The bass is driving and aggressive while the guitar screeches you into frenzy. The drummer? A maniac with timing that pummels you into madness. The dude is on. The vocal effects on "Forced to Live" get me in the gut. It's no secret that I am a huge fan of this band's music. It's frantic and has a chaotic sound of tension struggling against being contained that makes you want to explode. It's like the music plays these punks, not the other way around. The shit is good. A must have. (MB)
(Iron Lung)





NO FRIENDS – "Traditional Failures" 12" EP

Hardcore supergroup alert! This is the singer of MUNICIPAL WASTE and dudes from a couple bands I'm not familiar with (here at MRR HQ, we suspect they're "Fest bands") playing melodic hardcore punk with lots of sing-alongs. A couple of these tracks strongly bring to mind the big MINOR THREAT and 7 SECONDS anthems, plus maybe some newer-ish stuff like STRIKE ANYWHERE. It's a little polished and predictable, but they have plenty of energy and I have no doubt they're a big hit at all of your favorite summertime punk festivals. (JH)
(Kiss of Death)

NONE REMAIN – "Apparently There's More" EP

Heavy and metallic modern hardcore with a dark and brooding vibe. Thankfully they avoid busting into too many mosh parts, which is what I expect from these kinds of bands. It's still kind of boring though. (JH)
(Another Day of Nothing)

NOVEDADES CARMINHA – "Sinceramente" EP

Straight out of Spain comes this new EP, with four songs of snappy, catchy punk tuneage. Pogo-friendly rhythms and bratty vocals set the tone for these RAMONES/SCREECHING WEASEL/QUEERS summertime cruise jams. It's not the most original sound, but it's played with attitude and conviction. Fans of the style will grapple with this shit. (AM)
(Bowery)

NÜ SENSAE – "TV, Death and the Devil" LP

I've never been to Vancouver, but on my first visit I will be wearing shades and a pointy witches hat, and I will seek this band out for a sneaky séance. To these ears, NÜ SENSAE is a downbeat death duo of shadow-crawl bass-lines and murderer door-knock drums. Stealth punk bangers from beyond the grey. Suspenseful and dark the whole way through, the LP is punctuated with chanty incantations that come across with kinda gothic power gloomth, then switching up to some NO TREND-esque moments when the raging screech of vocalist Andrea takes a throatier turn, and there's even some sax in there, too. The drums are classically punk in style and delivery and that keeps the whole thing from getting overly arty or ponderous. This record is creepy as all hell. I love it! Pretty minimal in terms of production, so the whole thing has a very hollow, barely-there feel to it which is most pleasing. Highly listenable. Less is phwoar. Play this loud and in the dark, please. (BP)
(Nominal)

ON THE JOB / STAMFORD BRIDGE – split EP

STAMFORD BRIDGE—pity about the name (try Anfield Road, got a much better ring) but fortunately for my tired ears the tunes are absolute quality. Two tracks coming off as the TEMPLARS in their most reflective, popper moments. This is what I want my skinhead music to sound like, harking back to the glory years of '70s glam and pub rock and giving it a new set of balls. A band that knows its history and ain't afraid to break away from the dull, plodding Oi herd. Great. Next up, ON THE JOB with two boot anthems. These boys don't mess—big rocking riffs over football chanted choruses. Normally this wears thin on me, but I gotta give it to them—they pull this style off better than most. Packed full of aggro-infused energy, loads of heart and an ear for a simple but damn good tunes. The baldies got it totally right on this one. (SD)
(Longshot)

THE OPEN CASKET – "Worst Case Scenario" CD

This may be an old release from this Texas combo. The copyright says 2008. Their MySpace says this trio includes ex-members of the MOTARDS and the PUT-ONS. So why is this so horrible? Slow, sloppy drunk punk that tries to be mean and funny. Isn't that what makes it punk, you say? Unfortunately this just comes across as kind of dumb. (RL)
(Mortville)

OUIJA – "Tropical Depression" EP

There really are a lot of people doing the home-recording-type thing where they play all the instruments. On this one, Ray Cruz as OUIJA handles the guitar, vocals, bass and drums with a little bit of drum help from his pal (I assume) Dean Summers. The result is a fuzzy, quaint record of indie pop. There is some distortion layered on so I assume OUIJA wouldn't classify himself as such—but the noise can't cover the truth. He never quite rocks out. The songs are nice, but they never really get beyond that. (CK)
(Clan Destine)

OUTLAW ORDER – "Dragging Down the Enforcer" LP

EYEHATEGOD is one of the best bands ever. They pretty much single-handedly created the sludge subgenre by mixing the sleaziest elements of doom metal, Southern rock and punk, paving the way for other classic groups like NOOTHGRUSH, SOURVEIN and BUZZOV-EN. All of their output is crushing, from the demos and *In the Name of Suffering* to *Confederacy of Ruined Lives* and the newest tracks featured on *Preaching the "End-Time" Message*. It only stands to reason, then, that a band with nearly every member of EYEHATEGOD would be fucking awesome. OUTLAW ORDER features the entire current line-up of EYEHATEGOD except for lead guitarist and founding member Jimmy Bower. To take his place, bassist Gary Mader takes on second guitar and Pat Bruders of GOATWHORE and CROWBAR picks up the bass. With this seemingly minor change comes a very different band. OUTLAW ORDER still plays devastating sludge, but it's a faster variety, leaning a lot more on the punk and rock elements and less on the metal. Gone are most of the solos and the long heroin-fueled drones; most of the songs here don't even break the three-minute mark. Mike IX Williams still writes the lyrics, but unfortunately they're not included here. However, song titles like "Narco-Terroristos" and "Double Barrel Solves Everything," along with the slogan "Legalize Crime," indicate that drugs and violence still dominate his thoughts. This isn't EYEHATEGOD, but until their next album comes out this is a fine substitute, and a mandatory purchase fro anyone who likes their music rough, dirty, fucked up and heavy as hell. (VX)
(Emetic)

PARASITE – "Sin" EP

This, like another record I reviewed this month, could have come out in the late '80s. It's slow, rockin' metal not far from HELLHAMMER meets KILLING JOKE. But everything is just at an odd medium pace and those guitar riffs are just too simple. The production also sorta stinks. On "Zigai" when the guitarist kicks into another riff/solo halfway through the song, it's twice as loud as everything else. Not that into this one. (MH)
(Tadpole)

PASSION ARMÉE – 12"

It's the sunniest day of the year so far in San Francisco, and I'm sitting in the plush *Maximum Rocknroll* offices listening to icy French cold wave… It's not a winning combination, but to PASSION ARMÉE's credit, they're helping me forget that it's actually a nice sunny summer's day and reminding me that life is in fact a relentless existential struggle and in the end we all die alone. The French seem have a knack for this style, from the original cold wave sounds of the '70s through to recent bands like FRUSTRATION. The six songs here fit nicely in that tradition. Repetitive minor-chord bass lines, cut-glass guitar and occasional keyboard stabs set the scene for detached vocals that remind me a lot of the singer from the EX. I understand that the band has broken up since recording this disc—that's a shame. Great stuff. (AM)
(self-released)

PENS – "You Only Like Me When I Tell You I'm Wrong/Love Rules"

When the bass-line starts, I instantly get AVOCADO BABY flashbacks. Shambolic but gentle girl-punk-inflected-pop, melodic and echoey—sounds like it's a bedroom tape, but you know, in this day and age it probably isn't. I wanna dig this without reservation but it's a *liiiittle* too precious, pigeon-toed and wide-eyed. The main singer on side A has a trembling voice; she sounds like she just *can't* talk to the boy in the parka at the bus stop! She just can't! Honestly, just too fuckin' twee for me, this makes me wanna listen to the WRECKS, HUGGY BEAR or even the SHOP ASSISTANTS!—another lady punk band with serious intent, a backbone of sorts rather than a teary-eyed slice of cream puff cake. I like that there are a million bedroom girl popish-punker bands now, maybe in the wake of the VIVIAN/DUM DUM GIRLS, who knows or cares… But I want more of something, a secret ingredient that is missing from this! I went to one of those social networking sites to investigate other dimensions of the PENS sound, and their other songs seem more FINALLY PUNK-esque in a way that makes me sad that this is what I got for review rather than a bratty explosion of girl punk ideas… (LG)
(De Stijl)

PERDITION – "Room 101" EP

New York City's best punk band returns with a new EP! This recording turns down the noise but ratchets up the desperation in the best possible way. The vocalist really takes a star turn on this one, bellowing and screaming with the kind of sincerity you rarely hear. Of course the tunes are first-rate as well. These new songs are still very much rooted in the Dis/Scandi worship style, but the tweaked recording lets the filthy, frenetic bass playing and frantic drumming come through in a way they didn't on the first EP. Influences range from CRUCIFIX to KAAOS to DISCHARGE. I wouldn't go so far as to say this is an instant classic, but it is a must-buy for sure. I quite liked the first EP, but this is on another level entirely! Extra points for the really lovely (if that's the right word—well done at any rate) cover art. (AU)
(Distort Reality)

PFISTERS – "Narcicity" LP

Grebo noise-rock from Baltimore. PFISTERS' sound invites comparisons to SCRATCH ACID, later BLACK FLAG and IGNITION. The end result is something resembling a sludgier CIRCUS LUPUS, particularly in the vocal delivery. That's fine by me as I loved that band. I'm not sure what context this exists in. Is there a current swell in bands looking to the early '90s for inspiration? I feel like this isn't the first comparison to CIRCUS LUPUS I've made of late. Perhaps the mid-late period Dischord scene is due for a revival? I've heard a few bands lately that sounded like they'd listened to a lot of SWIZ and DAG NASTY… (AM)
(Fan Death)

PIGS – "Illuminati House Party" LP

I wasn't familiar with PIGS despite them being from right here in the Bay Area, and was I surprised when I dropped the needle! This reminds me of some early-'80s thrash, but the stuff that was still rooted in NWOBHM. What a sound! There are slow doom-y parts, guitar noodling, a punk vibe and straight-up metal from the early days. Throw in some strange lyrics like "We're going to the lake to feed the ducks" with music that sounds like a MEGADETH parody. I swear a couple of the tracks could have been on an IRON MAIDEN demo (with a different vocalist) and then there are the slow, SABBATH-y parts—and all if it with a vague punk sound. It's somewhat of a not-fully-realized mish-mash of sounds but when everything clicks, it works. (MH)
(Sugar Mountain)

THE PIONEERS OF SEDUCTION – "The Universe Is Setting Us Up" CD

Ah, another band of bros with a dream of hitting it big. Even paid Steve Albini to record it, making sure to have that boldly stated on the art several times in order to fully take advantage of that cred. Another CD with a press release talking about how they "knew this was going to be an amazing band and we knew we needed someone with balls to help us record it with the energy it required." Taking shit super seriously. Because this is serendipity, right? They just know it's going to happen, right? Wrong publication dudes, try *Spin* next time. Maybe then you can get Scott Weiland to sing back-ups one day. (MM)
(Doom and Bloom, no info)

PLASTIC JESUS – "Waterford" LP

Yawn. File this under "contrived" or "boring." How many songs do you guys need to sing about cocaine, weed, heroine, ODs, etc. to try to convince us that you are a cool rock'n'roll band? Instead of playing tired, played-out and cliché mid-tempo "rock" music, why don't you write some real ripping tunes about something more interesting? If every one of these tragic songs of anguish and loss are real-life experiences, then you have my apologies and sympathy—but I have a hard time believing that is the case, which brings me back to my opinion that this shit is boring and contrived. Sorry. (ML)
(WNB)

POLICE BASTARD – "It's Good to Hate" CD+DVD

Birmingham's POLICE BASTARD did multiple great records in the '90s and reformed a few years ago to play benefits for their original bassist who sadly passed away from terminal cancer. It's a tribute to their legacy that they continue to play classic, top-notch UK hardcore à la CHAOS UK, and at the outset of this five-track release they're in ace form, making the CD worth grabbing—everything is in perfect place for this sound of resistance and anger coupled with great, defiant lyrics… But even as someone who loves experimental hardcore, I feel this gets suspect halfway through when they begin to soften the edges with a bit of modern rock touches that, like the pop music that effervescently flows in the UK, subconsciously infiltrates itself into the music and corrupts it. Your band's called POLICE BASTARD—I want it to hammer! Loud guitars! Angry voices! No funky nu-metal parts! It's still strong. The CD ends up with a cover of the MOB, which is about as *not* hammering as you can get and really ends the CD on a sour note. Although the live version on the DVD is completely great, the energy they inject into the cover there just doesn't translate in the recording. The nice DVD includes plenty of hammering hardcore moments from their catalog to even things out. Black-and-white footage with a behind-the-scenes/live gig movie, as well as two different live sets with multiple camera angles and good sound quality, all edited to be very watchable and appropriate in length—cool! (KS)
(Iron Man)

THE POTENTIAL JOHNS – "Can I Really Not Go With You/Past Due"

How can such a small record such as this little delicious treat pack so much in, in so little time? Crammed full of emotion without being an early-'90s backpack nerd, a truckload of pop without a trace of sugar, and so much rock without even a hint of Satan. Only Jeff Burke of the MARKED MEN could pull off a one-man project so freaking huge that it makes the Titanic look like a tugboat. If this isn't one of the best singles I've ever heard then it sure is bloody close. Like all the ingredients that made the MARKED MEN the greatest punk band in the world comprised in to one single. A dark lo-fi feel permeates the groove adding a touch of Manchester sadness whilst still being one of the most uplifting records I've ever heard. Amazing. (SD)
(Dirtnap)

THE PROBE – "You Know You Want It" CD

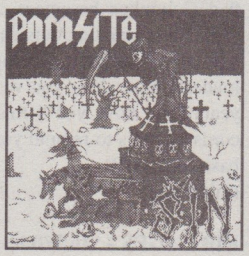
Sounds like a third-string early-'70s hard rock unit (BANG, etc.), the sort that got signed in the wake of GRAND FUNK RAILROAD's success but quickly faded to obscurity even if they had marginally better songcraft than the Michigan meatheads. I don't know if collectors of that genre are interested in any bands who have tapped (consciously or not) into that sound (not that it's any kind of even near-perfect simulation: the vocals are distinctly non-anachronistic for that style of anachronism) or only into *genyou-ine* historical artifacts, but it's here if they want it. (DD)
(Rankoutsider)

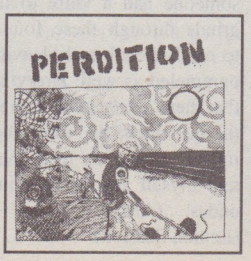
QUARTIER LIBRE – "69, 77, 84" CD

My roommate just said enough and turned this off after three songs. Once she left I put it back on and realized that I should have listened to her. Seriously, this CD is a shame to the French, ska bands, Oi bands, and everyone who wants to rock a Fred Perry. Not horrible in that still-not-too-uncommon dodgy way that follows some bands in this genre, but in a musically horrible way. Really, this is uninspired ska Oi that makes the '90s third-wave ska revolution seem like it was filled with SELECTORS and SPECIALS, rather than FALLING SICKNESS. Imagine if this was the BLAGGERS ITA, but not good and in French, and you have some idea of what QUARTIER LIBRE are like. On a side note, I can't read French so I have no idea what the lyrics are about, but research doesn't find anything dodgy about this band. I know it's stereotyping, but in this scene you still gotta check for bonehead content. (JF)
(Randale)

THE RATS – "I Don't Understand It/We Don't Need No One"

This two-song slab of pink vinyl offers a wide range of rock'n'roll for ya. The A-side has more of an upbeat and catchy garage punk sound with a driving rhythm guitar and twangy lead riff. It's pretty good overall. The B-side however is quite different—a slower number with an almost trippy and ethereal guitar sound because of a slight delay or reverb effect on the guitar. Along with that, there are "la-la-la-la" back-up vocals that gives this a '60s feel. Not entirely bad, but not as good as the more straightforward and driving A-side in my opinion. Overall, the production is a bit underwhelming and the resulting sound is a little too lo-fi for my taste… (ML)
(¡Puta!)





REAKCE NA ZMENU / RISPOSTA – split EP

A solid split 7" from two Czech bands. REAKCE NA ZMENU deliver manic thrashing with grindish vocals trading off between throaty growls and strained, screams that slather over everything at a slower pace atop the quick blastings. The recording is rumbly and blown-out, and the disjointed nature of the music and vocals makes it a hard read, but at that point you just crank it and let the chaos wash over you and smash your eardrums silly. RISPOSTA deliver no-fault guitar-driven Euro-crust that's more blown-out than on the their LP. Weird thing about this style is it's based on the repetitive, sustained pace that builds in a live setting (or a longer recording), and while the initial impulse is you could walk off to the bar at the show, come back ten or fifteen minutes later and you'd still be right where you left off, it's the churning power of the doom-laden sludgy riffs and charging hardcore, delivered one after the next, where this finds its strength. Solid, dark and crusty as fuck, but here too short of a dose!!! (KS)
(Insane Society)

REAL NUMBERS – 12"

What distinguishes a 12" from an LP? The number of songs? The record speed? Total length? This one has eight songs, but it also plays at 45 RPM. My friend Jon Von had it right: Big record, small hole, 33 RPM. Small record, big hole, 45 RPM. Get with the fucking program. Now, with that bit out of the way, let's get to the record. This is well-done, quirky, lo-fi pop music. It reminds me of bands like the SWELL MAPS and O-LEVEL, without really sounding like either of those bands. This one is worth the extra effort it might take to find it. (KK)
(Three Dimensional)

MIKE REP ET LES QUOTAS – "Stupor Hiatus" 2xLP

Long needed double-LP retrospective of MIKE REP shit spanning the '70s to the '90s. Nowadays people who think they know what they're talking about call him some kind of "lo-fi pioneer," but fuck that. This shit is too real for that kinda bullshit write-off. Listen to 1975's "Rocket to Nowhere" and hear him embrace the kind of blown-out monstrosity that had only previously existed via T.M.O.Q. HENDRIX bootlegs. Not for "lo-fi" but because that's what the tape came back sounding like in his trembling muffled Columbus basement. A.K.A. "fucking great!" Remember standing outside on the wet dirt mingling with all ten of your no longer closest friends at the loudest house show you've ever escaped, and know, years from now, you'll thank the lord there are records like this to remind you what you missed in the basement. (GB)
(Siltbreeze)

RIB CAGES – "In Wilderness" EP

Frenetic, spastic racket rock. These tunes sound like they were written and recorded in a hurry, like someone had a knife to their throats… The band grinds through these four songs without stopping to catch their breath, leaving the listener somewhat pummeled as well. Everything is on 110% so much that there's very little to grab on to. The exception is the last track: the vocals betray a melodic sensibility that is lacking from the previous songs. I don't find myself saying this much, but take a chill-pill, dudes… (AM)
(Lemon Session)

RIOT BRIGADE – "Go On!" CD

Twelve tracks of refreshingly charged political (i.e. left wing) punk/hardcore. More ANTI-FLAG musically than early PROPAGANDHI, though I suspect the latter has played a fairly major part in their lyrical development/concern. Angry, articulate, melodic—these are all good adjectives for a band. Judging by the names of the members and where it was recorded, I reckon they might be German. Well worth checking into. (RK)
(self-released)

RISPOSTA – "Schbalen Byl Novy Rad" LP

This Czech band has been going at it for about four years now. Members played in FESTA DESPERATO and EVIDENCE SMRTI. The sound is fast, brutal D-beat that brings WARCOLLAPSE but also a little more melodic FROM ASHES RISE-style crust to mind. The songs are ripping, but as a full-length it drags a little. Some of the riffs get pretty metallic sounding in the vein of HELLSHOCK. The booklet insert has some cool art and the packaging is solid. (DB)
(Insane Society)

ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS – "I Sell Soul/Romeo and Juliet"

And so the show goes on. New single from reformed ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS line-up that includes Richard Lloyd of TELEVISION on second guitar. It's hard to get past Smog Veil's patented trendy computer layout and a *highly* questionable bastardized RFTC rocket logo, and then there's the uncomfortable band photo on the back. But I guess in the end we're here for the music, and "I Sell Soul" really tears it up. Seriously this shit kills—deep, deep '70s Detroit rawk sound with some of the sickest searing guitar shreddery this side of SONICS RENDEZVOUS BAND's *City Slang*. I imagine the B-side won't do much for our readers, but the A-side is definitely worth the price of admission. I might go for the digital download to keep from having to flip past the ugly sleeve in my nicely tended stacks. (GB)
(Hearpen / Smog Veil)

ROCK THE LIGHT – "The Summer We All Got Laid" CD

Not really sure why this made it past the gatekeepers for review in this esteemed publication, but being the dutiful foot-soldier I am, here goes… MOTT THE HOOPE/"Young Dudes"-era DAVID BOWIE wannabes sing songs about, well, getting laid, taking drugs and being groovy. Competently played/produced/executed, though it all comes across as a rather uninspired version of RED KROSS. (RK)
(Cock Energy)

ROOFIE AND THE NIGHTSTALKER – "G.H.B." EP

Side B of this 7" is much stronger than it's leading neighbor. Consider a less clean and slightly roughed up female-fronted CARBONAS and you'll get an idea of where this band is coming from. However, they just don't have that zip that the CARBONAS possess that makes me wish I were in them. You know, that bit of magic that takes them from being too generic to generic done really right. That being said, this is a fair example of Bay Area garage/power-pop/punk-rock-flavored rock'n'roll that maybe hopes one day to get its ass over to Memphis and/or Atlanta... Speaking of ass, I could've done without the ass on the (ahem) rear of this 7". Girls in knickers are cute—I think the world already gets that. (GG)
(Rich Bitch)

SAND CREEK MASSACRE / YEARS OF DECAY – split LP

SAND CREEK MASSACRE from the Netherlands plays heavy melodic crust in the TRAGEDY vein. The guitars are pretty clean and gallopy and the vocals are throaty and screamed in low tones. Their four songs are extremely long; they aren't bad, but not great either. The musicianship, vocals and recording are all good, but lack the subtlety needed to stand out. And the sample in the middle of the record is way long. The YEARS OF DECAY from Rennes, France, lays down six melodic crust tracks that are closer to REMAINS OF THE DAY with some more D-beatish moments. I have to say that I enjoyed this side more. The vocals are interesting; higher pitched and throaty. There are some really hauntingly pretty moments as well as some driving beats with changes in music that kept me interested. Well done. (MB)
(Crashlanding / I Feel Good / Kink / Tanker / etc.)

SAUNA YOUTH – "Youth" EP

England is blowing up; for so long a wasteland of punk nothingness it can finally hang its head high with the likes of the SCEPTRES, SHITTY LIMITS and welcomed new edition SAUNA YOUTH. It's got that great early-'80s vibe—ADOLESENTS, ZERO BOYS, etc.—as well as hints of those Scandinavian heavy hitters NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS and the YOUNG WASTENERS. It wears its influencers proudly on its cut-off sleeves but still manages to bring something new and vibrant to an old-school style. Taking a more off-kilter approach to an usually direct sound that makes this a stand out amongst many. Just the tonic to help any ex-pat get over that World Cup fumble. A top ten of the month. (SD)
(self-released)

SAVAGE PINKOS – "We're So Cheap" EP

There is something oddly compelling about SAVAGE PINKOS. I've heard many bands like this before, but I still love this kind of shit. It's messy, frantic and seemingly out of control. The music is blown-out and the vocalists (mostly a male voice, but I think that is a female on the first song) sound like he/she is always running out of breath, taking big gulps of air after each sentence. Fast and fun and chaotic. This is really cool. (CK)
(5-10 Fab)

SEE YOU IN HELL / SYSTEMATIC DEATH – "Backdrop EU Tour" EP

This split has the best SEE YOU IN HELL songs I've heard—really catchy, somewhat melodic hardcore that sounds like a Burning Spirits BGK or something. Big fan of their side of the split. The tracks aren't especially dynamic but they're solid and catchy. They've gotten to do some cool splits in the past year or two. The SYSTEMATIC DEATH songs are raging with lots of dynamics and energy, but lacking the hooks of SEE YOU IN HELL in my opinion. The last song on the SYSTEMATIC DEATH side is probably the most brutal. I wanna listen to SEE YOU IN HELL again and maybe revisit some of their older stuff. More cool artwork done by Sugi. Good record. (DB)
(Insane Society)

SENDERS – "Recovery" EP

More '90s nostalgia here, this time from Gainesville: octaves and harmonies, earnest vocals and suspense-filled build-ups. Part PITCHFORK, part JAWBREAKER, and all-in-all pretty rocking. Reminds me of baggy jeans, gas-station jackets, Sheep shoes and backpacks with patches. (AM)
(Kiss of Death)

SICK/TIRED – "High Life" LP

Have been waiting for this release, as I dug their previous EPs and comp tracks. SICK/TIRED play high-energy fastcore/grindcore and on this full-length have mixed up the sounds a bit, making it a great listen. Slow, noisy tracks, straight-ahead hardcore and of course fast grindcore. The first track on side B is a cover of "Day by Day" by PHOBIA, and the last track, "Banishment," is about five times longer than the others—mostly slow and heavy with a EYEHATEGOD vibe and a stoner metal sound including a guitar solo. This Illinois four-piece tear it up on this full-length. (MH)
(To Live a Lie)

SMALL BROWN BIKE – "Composite, Volume Two" 45

SMALL BROWN BIKE still churning out the hits. Kinda crazy to think these dudes are one of the few '90s emo holdouts; I seem to remember their name bandied about back in '95-96 when I stopped paying attention. At this rate they must be "The Current Face of '90s Emo." Really clean recording that sounds something like how I remember JAWBOX filtered through fifteen years of technological advancements in da studio. The B-side wouldn't be out of place in an episode of *CSI*. Custom built for your iPod replete with download code and purple splatter wax to boot! (GB)
(No Idea)

TV SMITH – "Sparkle in the Mud" CD

If you ain't familiar, TV SMITH once honed his skills singing, playing guitar and writing some of the best tunes ever in one of my all-time faves the ADVERTS. After the aforementioned band broke up, SMITH kept on recording; a ton of his stuff was released mainly under the moniker of the EXPLORES whilst a shed-load of his other tunes never seeing the light of day. Luckily, Boss Tuneage did us all proud, dusted off the cobwebs and gave these obscurities the release they deserved. 21 tracks of bittersweet reflective pop. The music ain't punk but the sentiment more than makes up for it. All tracks present were recorded between 1979 and 1983, paving the way for the likes of BELLE AND SEBASTIEN, the WEATHER PROPHETS and a slew of others. (SD)
(Boss Tuneage)

SONOROUS GALE – "Pizazster" EP

SONOROUS GALE delivers emo-drone drum and bass action from the wintry wonderland of Buffalo, NY. Poetic, melodic and well executed jams, lacking a spark or drive and the complexity that bands like the MELVINS or SHELLAC incorporated to define such a sound. This is a bit forced, boring and without the raw and delicious talent a band like BIG BUSINESS has to rock you into a shocked state. (RM)
(Wrong Foot)

SON SKULL – "Birth Scene/Rewind" 12"

Holy shit. This record is fucking great. Heavy, relentless Northwest punk with incendiary female vocals—her voice honestly reminds me of the singer from '80s Japanese band the NURSE. To repeat my aforementioned sentiment, holy shit. When listening to bands from the Northwest it's easy to file them away however misguidedly under Fred 'n' Toody or the WIPERS, but in this case the comparison is earned. It's what SON SKULL has done with that tried-and-true eternal sound that makes this record great. This has a primal, desperate feel, but it isn't some flailing, aimless doom—SON SKULL has a power to their sound and a totality of intent that makes them so compelling. I looked at the cover and initially thought I was in for some Oly anarcho-primitivist piecrust, but soon realized I was looking at Lauren Likely art—pretty much always a good thing—and am glad to have been proven wrong. This long-running Olympia band comes from a scene that has continually produced interesting mutations on the punk or hardcore idea, from SISTERS, GUN OUTFIT, MILK MUSIC, through to HPP and SEX VID. *Birth Scene/Rewind* is no exception. The song "Perennial Death" makes me want to ride bikes through the redwoods in the dark; it's got this total cinematic feel, and is as good as anything Fred and Toody Cole did with the RATS. Essential. (LG)
(Perennial)

SORELLA MALDESTRA – "Maltiempo" CD

This is the new release from this Italian band whose killer demo came out 1979 (with a vinyl version in 1997 by Flowers of Grain). This new album is way too over-produced, including sound and vocal effects. It could be good if they stripped it down, but it's just a bad rock record. The spirit of creativity and experimentation that made me fall in love with this band is still on this record and I can understand where they are trying to go with it, but it misses the mark. The vocals are good, gravely, screamy, rough, tough and experimental with amazingly rad yells. This guy is not afraid to use whatever sounds he can make and this is the saving grace of the album. There are some great parts reminiscent of TURBONEGRO-style rock, modern Oi, cool organ parts, some really good riffage and songs that almost make it (like their slow jam: "BirMANia BeerMANiA"), but overall it's just too over the top. (MB)
(Banksville)

TALK IS POISON – "Rage to Infinity" EP

TALK IS POISON is back, and they're playing the same intense, no frills, crusty hardcore punk they always did. It's been quite a few years since these guys called it quits, but none of their energy is gone. The songs here are as heavy, powerful and catchy as any they've written. Most of the members have kept pretty active playing in a bunch of great bands, and that's certainly helped keep them from getting rusty. This is definitely a triumphant return for one of the better Bay Area bands of the last two decades. Get off your ass and buy this *now*. (VX)
(self-released, available from Bad Skulls)

TEARGAS – "The Mirror Stares Also" EP

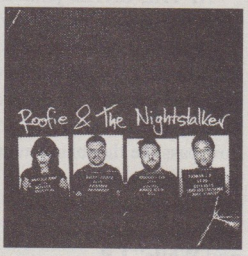
This is powerful, relentless hardcore that has that colossal feel evoked by bands like TOTALITÄR and BASTARD. There's a heavy Japanese influence with some *killer* metallic leads scattered throughout songs that are mostly based on a heavy, brutal D-beat. Another point of reference is CONTRAST ATTITUDE, who employs a similar formula, albeit with more noise and caustic brutality. The guitar tones and vocals here are comparatively very clear and the vocalist brings *Under the Ashes* FRAMTID to mind. The recording itself is fucking great—drums, guitars, everything sounds loud and clear. Apparently this is the first release on Yeap of PISSCHRIST's new label. Great record. (DB)
(Hardcore Victim)

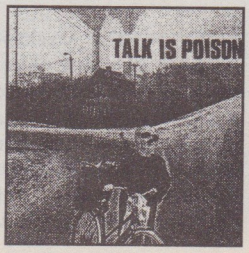
TEENAGE KICKS – "Electric Girl/Another Night"

Is this the first band to be called TEENAGE KICKS? How could that name have survived that long? It makes no sense at all. This is straightforward, catchy punk rock that incorporates just a little of the pub rock sing-along thing. The A-side, in particular, is so catchy it's infectious. While it looks to be low budget, the pic sleeve is very cool. (KK)
(Team Science)

TEENAGE KICKS – "Uptight" LP

Hmm, with a name like TEENAGE KICKS, is it any surprise that the bands owes a little something to the UNDERTONES? Unfortunately this doesn't come close to matching the power of that band, but would fit in nicely alongside the last CLOROX GIRLS





LP or as a band opening for the CUTE LEPERS. I don't know—it's melodic and has the sound right, it's just missing one essential ingredient…hooks. (JF)
(Team Science)

TEENAGE NIGHTWAR – "Alexander Graham Bell/Letdown"

Even a couple of days after listening to this I find myself thinking about it repeatedly—I'm really obsessed with TEENAGE NIGHTWAR's energetic sound. This is a frantic beast of a single that builds without ever releasing. Both sides have a momentum that is unyielding and gut punching. The first side is all energetic bouts of urgent scumminess and hopelessness broken up by unaffected and apathetic but yet frustrated vocals. The B-side does let up the tension a bit with bass-driven hooks but it's a needed come down and these two songs fit well together. It's over way too fast and the urgency never fully wears off, leaving the listener slightly agitated and lost. (AL)
(Lemon Session)

TERRIBLE TWOS – "Keep It Grey/Catch a Cold"

AT THE GATES jamming with the late and great JAY RETARD. A match made in heaven if ya ask me, and it works. What more can I say? If you like yer sex vanilla-style stay well away, but if a bit of biting, slapping and the odd crocodile clamp is your thing, then by all means grab a yourself a copy. Loving it, now pass me that black mambo Mr. Hubert. (SD)
(Lemon Session)

THIS RUNS ON BLOOD – "The Ocean in Black and White" LP

As a dedicated screamo band, THIS RUNS ON BLOOD does a rather obvious job of securing that description on their full-length, not straying far from the screamy busywork of yesteryear notables like Seattle's BLOOD BROTHERS. The intrigue of the (f'ing incredible!) 12x12 booklet wears off quickly once the needle is actually dropped on this lovely milky white vinyl. The appeal of sassy, downtrodden, overdone, hollow-sounding and hyper-crucial swoosh hairdos is lost as it becomes apparent that this bass-guitar-less band is trying to rock like it's 1999. If that was even appealing in the first place. (RM)
(End Theory)

TOTAL ABUSE – "Mutt" LP

Every song either sounds like "Damaged I" or "II," which isn't a bad thing if you're damaged, but I go to synagogue every Tuesday and I can't relate. This record is sort of funny actually. "Eunuch" made me chuckle and there are *two* songs called "Secret Passage." Sleeve photo by Robert Freeman, apparently. Oh, wait, there's a hell of a lot more inserts, I think they're going for the WHITEHOUSE guys vibe. Vibe. I ain't gonna lie—this thing is all right and if you've got money, you might as well spend it. We are in a recession, after all. (BB)
(Post Present Medium)

TOXIC FUSE – "Afraid of Love" LP

Not at all what I was expecting by judging this album by its cover. His name is TOXIC FUSE and the album cover is black with a purple skull. Yet, these are introspective songs about being brokenhearted. I guess that's where the album title comes from. It is kind of country rock, but with many psychedelic flourishes. The guitars simply strum and then fuzz out in almost a Thurston Moore type way. The vocals are very sincere and sung with a whiskey drawl. Weirdly interesting. If he is somewhat handsome (no picture on the record), I could definitely see myself swooning. (CK)
(Helltunes)

THE TRADEWINDS – "Learning to Read" EP

These winds of trade are blowing warmly in your face straight out of Tempe, AZ. Though they sound like the cousins (you know, those you see only at funerals, weddings and christenings—you're related and completely different, yet somehow really similar at the same time) of Sacramento, CA. Think of a more scream-and-whine-led hybrid of the BANANAS and FM KNIVES. There are also hint-ettes (yep, just made up a new word) of college indie rock in the form of group sing-alongs that nudge to the TEENAGE COOL KIDS. Not a bad little EP; maybe if they were good live and/or a pleasant bunch of kids to share a beer with, I'd buy it. (GG)
(Gilgongo)

T-34 – "Premium Hardcore" LP

Bizarrely named after a WW2-era Soviet tank, German band T-34 is a juggernaut of unrelenting hardcore, cranking thirteen tracks of straight-ahead mid-'80s-ish hardcore (à la OUT COLD, the PLAGUE and VORHEES) where the direction and delivery of the music is still dedicated to power through straight-up speed, but pauses with frequent breaks, intros and mid-tempo twists. Hoarse, even-keel vocals emit harsh lyrics all in German but have small translations included like "You can't hate anyone if you don't hate yourself" or "Reality is shit, take more drugs." *Premium Hardcore* is the goofiest LP title—like everything else is "cut-rate hardcore" or "sub-par hardcore"—but since this is limited to 300 copies, I guess get moving lest you pay a premium. Odd cartoony cover of a Russian soldier impaling a samurai? What the fuck? Take more drugs! (KS)
(Walking Coffin / Pain of Mind)

TWIN STUMPS – "Seed Bed" LP

The second LP from this NYC noise rock band is a half-step forward from its predecessor—which couldn't have been released much more than a year ago. While still massively blown-out, TWIN STUMPS has cleaned just a bit of the dirt from their sound and incorporated a slightly more traditional sense of song structure. The result is a heavy, lurching bulldozer assault—a relentless forward drive rather than an all-out mess of noise crawling aimlessly about. While I can appreciate both approaches, I found the subtle added touches a nice change of pace—in particular, the restrained, almost atmospheric instrumental track on side one that provided a breather between the aural pummelings. While the artwork is an improvement on their debut, that's really not saying much. What I'd really like to see, though, is a lyric sheet—the dude is singing something, after all, and I'm genuinely curious as to what else (however abstract or specific) these guys are trying to express along with the ugly music. (CS)
(Fan Death)

TYPHUS – "Insect Terrorist" LP

So TYPHUS released one of the rarest Japanese HC punk singles (released on Michiro Endo of the STALIN's Political Records), and members went on to such notable greats as the STALIN, GAUZE and ABURADAKO. This bootleg contains the self-titled flexi, the *Live Take* cassette (originally planned to be an LP on member Tam's label ADK but never happened) and all known live recordings. If early Japanese punk with a hardcore edge appeals to you, then track this down. I know I did. Contains a nice informative booklet. (RR)
(bootleg, no info)

VIPER – "Committing the Seven Deadly Sins" EP

Blasphemous hardcore! Awesome! Certainly nothing new, but this is a fairly original record, sounding like NME crossed with New York band DAMAGE or something. The recording is drenched in reverb (almost to a fault), creating that kvlt atmosphere. I recently saw these guys live with BONE AWL, which makes sense as both have similar characteristics. But to my ears, VIPER is more of a hardcore band with a blackened punk vibe or some shit rather than the other way around. Whatever it is I dig these little vignettes on the seven deadly sins. Good stuff. (DB)
(Viper / 540 Records)

VIVISICK – "Respect and Hate" LP

Man, this album has been released all over the world! Having already come out on various formats and on various labels in Asia, here's the European vinyl. And yup, it's still a killer album. VIVISICK combines melodic hooks and screaming, angry hardcore in a way few bands have accomplished since the heyday of 9 SHOCKS TERROR. These songs always seem to be just on the verge of completely falling apart in the best possible way as every member plays and sings and hard as they can, pushing relentlessly forward at all times. There are a few samples and slower moments to let you catch your breath, but mostly this is all go, all the time. While it's definitely hardcore punk, some of the hooks are so catchy you'll be thinking SNUFF or the DUDOOS. This LP comes with a huge fold-out insert with lyrics and song explanations in Japanese and English. It's a fun, frantic album that absolutely belongs on your shelf. I wish I'd been able to see these maniacs when they toured the East Coast. Maybe a return trip to the US is in the cards? (AU)
(Insane Society)

WALLS – "Stare at the Walls" EP

A nice little tastebud-wetter here from one of the most intense units in the game. This new three-songer (one of which is a DIE KREUZEN cover) is, as one would expect from WALLS, full of wrenching rhythms, classy and sickening guitar playing, throbbing repetition with the hammer always cocked to blow you away. The songs feel like they're written with anticipation in mind—anticipation that is never relieved or realized when you'd expect it to be. In one word: frustrated. I like this 7". A lot. WALLS is a one-of-a-kind band, for sure. (JU)
(Iron Lung)

WARCOLLAPSE – "Crust as Fuck Existence" LP

Reissue of this classic release from the legendary Swedish crust punk band. WARCOLLAPSE usually get lumped into D-beat crust, but back when this came out their sound was more of a slow, depressed, dirge-y crust more in line with AMEBIX than DISCHARGE. Four tracks in twenty-two minutes, so it's obvious these aren't two-minute D-beat attacks. Hard to believe this is the first time this mini-album has been released on vinyl. If you like crust it's somewhat your duty to listen to the track "Crust as Fuck Existence." (MH)
(Insane Society)

WARRIOR KIDS – "A La Gloire Des Losers" CD

So I was probably gonna dis this but with a little research I discovered it's a historic French Oi band dating back to 1983. Vocals in French, which is not my preferred language in all honesty. I guess this is their latest LP of new material. It's pretty good with lots of melody and a touch of NEWTOWN NEUROTICS. The French punks are probably gonna go apeshit over this. (RL)
(Randale)

WASHINGTON DEAD CATS – "For the Love of Ivy" 10"

CRAMPS tribute band covering two CRAMPS songs and six CRAMPS arrangements of other covers. Not sure what the point is, since the originals (and the CRAMPS' versions as well, in the case of those other six) are, but they sound as they had fun doing it. Good for them. (DD)
(Be Fast)

WETDOG – "Frauhaus" LP

I first heard WETDOG when my friend Tobi played me their demo probably in 2001 or 2002, and I freaked out totally and couldn't find anything out about the band at all except they had some link to the COUNTRY TEASERS. When their first LP came out in 2008, you frustratingly couldn't even get it in the US! Then Captured Tracks got their hooks in and thus here is the longwinded intro to a (duh) positive review of WETDOG's second LP. WETDOG plays a spectacular brew of tightly wound punk and '80s indie in the realm of FIRE ENGINES or the FALL with some incredibly necessary brat attack (but exceedingly non-grating) KLEENEX or even the PETTICOATS style vocals. This band, along with TRASH KIT, makes me incredibly excited about the state of London-based girl punk. Each song is a selection of fireworks, a million ideas somehow contained within a novel and enticing song structure… The singer's delivery is somewhere between MARK E. SMITH and LUNG LEG in a most excellent combination. This is fun without being throwaway or embarrassing. Fuck yeah. (LG)
(Captured Tracks)

WHITE BOSS – LP

Perfect fuck-the-world headphones music. Crushing, epic, heavy hardcore that does not resort to overwrought dramatic histrionics. The first song sort of reminded me of *Communal Living*-era SEX VID with the added brutality of a way more raw/less produced INTEGRITY. The guitar sound is so fucking awesome; it's really dense/rich sounding, almost like *Earth 2*. The vocals are coughed out in a desperate, dismissive fashion. Fuck, I am finding it impossible to do this justice. I will just say that I have been listening to it on repeat for hours. When a band manages to create a sound that is total and absolute, it's hard to explain to difference between it and all the rotten shit that clutters the world—usually intentional epic/crushing music just sounds trite, like bad poetry, so full of empty signs. Get this. (LG)
(Perennial)

WILD THING – "Now I Wanna Die in a Nuclear War" EP

That rat Brace Belden and his little rats Ian and Dan have squirmed out of their little rat-holes and into the studio, resulting in three of the most punkiest tunes ever recorded by rodents. If ya don't like this single then you either got beef with that beefcake Belden are you simply don't like punk. Taking everything great about the ol' Killed by Death scene, cranking the sleazeometer right up and adding extra tunes to the already outrageous tuneage. They may look and act like a bunch of gimmicks but this band is far from it, taking the essence of punk and making a record of pure rock'n'roll quality takes not just balls but also brains. It don't mean I don't still wanna punch that little junkie right in his tiny little dick. (SD)
(Daggerman)

MATT WILGA – "There I Go" EP

This is the fully solo debut 7" from MATT WILGA. As he is the drummer from FAILURES, BUCKET FULL OF TEETH, and CANCER KIDS, this is not exactly what one would expect. It's a really sweet solo bedroom indie rock platter. The A-side is a reverb-drenched yet somehow still sing-songy emotional twee ballad that has wannabe *Psychocandy* vocals. The B-side has two tracks which are a little bit more upbeat, fuzzed-out and sun-drenched. The total sum is a product that's a tad guilty-pleasure worthy. The single is the first release on Labor of Love Records, and that's exactly what this package is—a labor of love. The sleeve and insert are beautiful with imprinted letterpress. Limited to 300 on white. (AL)
(Labor of Love)

WILLFUL NEGLECT – "Both 12"s on an LP" LP

Another '80s reissue of something I'm not familiar with at all other than the name. As you can guess from the title, this LP has the St. Paul, MN band's two 12"s—the self-titled one from '82 and *Justice for No One* from '83. The closest sonic comparison I can think of to the WILLFUL NEGLECT sound is the ZERO BOYS, based on the tone and the playing ability (which is thru the roof). The interplay of great leads and sick melodies really makes this pop. One thing I love about the '82 hardcore sound is the recordings. All the levels are perfect and this shit just sounds so good. (JU)
(Havoc / Hoehnie)

JOHNNY WOLGA – "The Punk Sessions" EP

Who the fuck is JOHNNY WOLGA? These guys didn't just crawl out of the woodwork. They've been somewhere. They have to have been. If you are a fan of the TOY DOLLS and/or DIE TOTEN HOSEN, you will lap this up. I did. It's like if you took the TOY DOLLS and added an extra dose of German sing-along punk—oh, and just a tiny bit of COCK SPARRER. That is definitely what it is like. This may be the catchiest record ever made. Tasty. (KK)
(Longshot Music)

YOUNG GOVERNOR – "Cindy's Gonna Save Me/Cannabanoids"

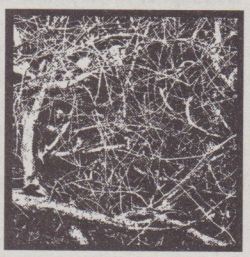
YOUNG GOVERNOR features Ben Cook from MARVELOUS DARLINGS. Once you know that, you can't help hearing the similarities. If you're a fan of power-chord power-pop, this is for you. The A-side even has a sort of jangly quality to it. The B-side is what happens when young pop musicians take acid and then go into the studio.
(Dirtnap)

V/A – "Aggro Punk" CD

30 tracks in total on this all-German comp, taking in some well-known names such as SLIME, ELF and OHL and stack of others. Not one band stuck out—all too generic and well forgettable. It's not a question of bad, just bland. (SD)
(Aggressive Punk Produktionen)

V/A – "More Than Music Volume 1" 3xEP

Evidently some delays affected this project, as these songs were recorded 2004-06. As a result, a number of the bands are gone or have been quiet recently—BALLAST, SIGNAL LOST, and SCHIFOSI, for example. I would list these three bands as not having their best material here. They are decent songs, but are shown up by the savage tracks from EASPA MEASA, SANGRE and the ASSASSINATORS. There are no bad songs here, so fans of JUGGLING JUGULARS, ABDUCTEE SD and LA FRACTION (covering BIKINI KILL) will be stoked. Crust and melodic hardcore are well represented on this release. Each EP in this boxed set has four bands and is on pretty split-color vinyl. Each band gets a page or two in the booklet to address sexism (see the comp's title) or just print their lyrics. Every band has at least one female member. This is a really great compilation, worth the wait. (JM)
(15 Euro ppd: Stonehenge)



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DEMOS

Send demos and CD-Rs to: MRR attn: Demos, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please provide a postpaid price and a mailing address with your demo! Reviews by Bryony Beynon, Layla Gibbon, Aaron Hall, Brad Lambert, Trash, and xYosefx

xALL THIS MURDERx – Here's a tape of basic but still killer grind/powerviolence from a South Jersey two-piece. In case you didn't guess from the Xs around the name, these dudes are straight edge. In case you didn't guess from the "two-man grind" description, there's more time taken up on this tape by movie samples than by actual songs. But with song titles like "Vasectomy Not Vivisection," what's not to love? (xYosefx) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, 406 Georgetown Rd., Glassboro, NJ 08028, myspace.com/asstomouthnj)

BODY COP – This was sent to me by a travelling shitworker who knows what is gonna hit me the right way in terms of sound... Fuck, DC is bringing it right now... This is absolutely insane and awesome, one of the most interesting bands I have heard in a long time. The vocalist has a voice that reminds me of the woman from JAKS/CELEBRATION, the music that lurks behind her is sinister and loping, aggressive and seedy somehow... It again reminds me of the era before I discovered punk and was going to see bands like COME and JESUS LIZARD, but this is punk, it's deconstructed and raw, sounds flagellated and on fire. Fuck! I just have a dubbed CD-R but I am pretty sure this is coming out on Fan Death... (Layla) (5-song CD-R, no info but try www.fandeathrecords.com)

COLLEEN GREEN – A CD-R of DIY pop tunes I guess, bedroom (as in Garageband macbook) inoffensive bubblegum type sounds — as in "Dance the night away, I wanna be yours, etc etc etc" and then "will you come on me cos I want to be degraded" tune. Er, Nice work. Naaaat. This seems to be a one-person project. Liner includes a money shot of the producer of these songs posing in her mirror next to a Descendents poster (there is a cover of their song on this tape). I have no reference points for this really and I feel pretty good about myself for that. Oh it comes with two inscrutable one page comics that might entice you if you're into that sort of business. (Bryony) (www.myspace.com/c0lleen1)

THE CRAW – Gnarly fucking hardcore from Perth, Australia I get the feeling Perth is a total hellhole based on how pissed off and violent sounding all the hardcore bands I've heard from there. Burly vocals over some fast thrash, with a serious HERESY, RIPCORD, E.N.T, name your favorite '80s UK thrashcore band influence. I am really stoked on this, the guitar tone sounds a lot like UNSEEN TERROR, super loud and almost chainsaw like, there are a few parts that are a little out of place, but I can look past this since everything else is so ripping. Lyrics are of the VOORHEES fuck off and die school. Apparently they have a full length on the way out, or it's already out and I would imagine it's even better. (Aaron) (8-song CD-R, lyrics included, livefastdiedrunk@yahoo.com.au)

CUDEVASO – Ten tracks of somewhat esoteric neon (in packaging at least) art-garagey jangle that's light on catchiness and heavy on tinny noise. This band is three dudes (I think) from somewhere close to Santiago del Compostela. The first track kicks in as really distorted tinny punk and the rest of the CD is a similar jam, not too heavy on actual songs, but the banger on here is "So What?" a distorted garage number with IGGY-ish vocals (on a good day, or the dude from the BLACK LIPS on a bad day.) It's a shame you can't hear the Farfisa due to all the fuzz. Referencing MySpace in your song titles is kind of cringy but that's just me, I don't mind this. The EP is amusingly called "Tryin' to fuck you" and I'm left with the feeling they missed out the "with." (Bryony) (10-song CD, Fater Disks, www.myspace.com/cudevaso)

ELECTRIC FUNERAL *D-beat Noise Attack* – The title of this tape is really all you need to read to know what this is. No SABBATH or metal influence (unfortunately for me), just straightforward heads down D-beat for about ten minutes. Noisy but not a in a noise for the sake of noise blown out chaotic distort fest kind of way. Just killer blown out hardcore along the lines of DISCLOSE and, well a shit load of other bands, but it sounds and looks killer so check it out, and any other shit they have, this is very well done. Or not—mine is number 25 out of 30. (Aaron) (8-song tape, lyrics included, distorttheworldrec@gmail.com)

EUROTICS – Lo-fi, "KBD", garage, blah, blah, blah. This strikes me as another band made up of former GOVERNMENT WARNING fan boys playing dirty, offensive punk rock. The recording is raw but not in a good way, and the vocals are kind of goofy sounding. No lyrics, so all I can judge them off of is the cover art, a topless woman with a photo shopped paper bag over her head they were also nice enough to include an ad for the Granny Fuck phone sex line—thanks. Sounds kind of forced to me, the guitarist plays some pretty decent leads but I think they need to try to do their own thing a little more. (Aaron) (6-song tape, no lyrics, www.myspace.com/richmondss)

FAG ENABLERZ – Schlocky name, I was surprised to see this was from Ireland. I guess there may be some cultural relevance to taking on the Westboro Baptist reference, but that's kind of unfortunate either way. I don't think this band care too much about that anyway as they appear from the sound and aesthetic of the tape to be highly Americanised. Six tracks of straightforward punk with the odd breakdown. Whilst some of the lyrics are kind of funny (This band is lucky that I am still enough of a child to find "Small cock! No way! Stick it in! Every day!" mildly amusing) the sarcasm comes across as so dismissive of punk as to warrant the question what do you like about it, and would you like it less if you weren't playing such a substandard example of it? The general tone of this demo can be summed up in a quote from one of their songs "Look at me – I don't give a fuck." Congrats, or should that be Congratz. (Bryony) (6-song cassette, heavychongo@gmail.com)

GLASS DICKS – So the name of the record is *Drunk Till Death* and all the album art is of passed out dudes and empty beer cans. There are certain assumptions you can make about such a collection of songs but despite its GG ALLIN-esque overtones the band has a few interesting things to say and was altogether enjoyable. A lot of songs are reminiscent of the GERMS' style with high-pitched and snotty vocals that are both grating and humorous. Standout songs are "IROC Camaro," a tribute to drunk driving and running over children, and the last song on the CD, the anti-Bush "Four More Years." Yeah the guy isn't in office anymore but I still love a good Bush bash. (Brad) (13-song CD-R, lyrics not included, www.myspace.com/glassdicks)

GOLDEN STAPH – Pretty much prized this demo from the hands of another reviewer so enamored of it am I. "Dr Tony," the first song here, has already been my bedroom classic for a few months—brace yourselves chapesses and chaps. All four songs on this cassette will only add further fuel to the swirling mystique around just what it could be about the vast sub-equatorial landmass of Oz that produces such exciting music. I'm under qualified to theorize on that, but what I do know is that GOLDEN STAPH are excellent. It doesn't really sound classically Australian in terms of punk, which in my brain has always been a bit on the blokey-mental-junkie-genius side of things, rather than the raw lady-vox keys guitar fuzz we have here, but feel free to correct me. To me this recalls more the howling high-pitched wonderment of raucous echo chamber shouters like ACTION PACT or even HANS-A-PLAST. Sonically this is extremely vintage upbeat punk, late '70s, in a magic dark alley somewhere between the Masque and the Roxy (holy shit dream city) but without sounding obsolete, and the keys are a welcome addition working super well with the guitar. The guitar and keyboards work together super well, it's sparse and Amber's vocals reminds me a lot of Olga de Volga's stint with THE LEWD. (Bryony) (4-song cassette, goldenstaphperth@gmail.com / goldenstaphperth@gmail.com)

GRAB BAG *Look Up Look Down* – I would say this is more of an actual album than a demo, what

with the 15 songs and all. It makes sense that they're from Florida, it has that scrappy pop punk sound I associate with that area. In other words a real strong late '80s East Bay (CRIMPSHRINE) sound, but played by guys in their late 20s/early 30s as opposed to their teens. I guess they call themselves Shed Punk, makes sense this sounds like it was recorded on a boombox in a shed. (Aaron) (15-song CD-R, lyrics included, www.southernshedpunk.com)

I'M DIET – This came packaged in a crazy origami cover on one of those annoying 3" CD-Rs, seems like a lot of work for three minutes worth of music. The tunes that are on here are pretty good fast hardcore that I can't help but be reminded of ROMANTIC GORILLA by—probably due to the speed and killer female vocals. Even the lyrics seem to be written in a similar style. This is actually the perfect length, I couldn't imagine wanting to hear more than one side of a seven inch of this kind of stuff. Eight songs, two of them being DESCENDENTS covers. ("All" and of course "No, All"). (Aaron) (8-song CD-R, Lyrics included, limited to 100, myspace.com/imdiet)

NAUGHTY GIRLS – This is a great demo. NAUGHTY GIRLS from Montreal go for a more stripped down early punk as played by hardcore kids sound. They succeed by keeping a more hardcore edge in the music, especially the GANG GREEN-esque snarling vocals. Pretty similar to CAREER SUICIDE, but I like this more, as it's not as slick as that band, but the same fast paced early hardcore sound with a really clear guitar tone. The song "Running Out" is kind of weak, but other than that this is a ripper. Three of the six songs are about drinking, so I finally got a demo with lyrics I can relate to. (Aaron) (6 song tape lyrics included, limited to 75, naughtygirls@gmail.com)

NIMBUS TERRIFIX – Fuck, that was over before I even had a chance to type anything. Short songs played well, but definitely hardcore not grindcore. I know this features members of other bands, but I can't be bothered to look it up and I don't really care. The point is, this is good. Worth getting, so get it. (xYosefx) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, Blastcat c/o Patrick Forrest, 1701 Lancaster Ave., Shillington, PA 19607, bwastbeat@gmail.com)

OPT OUT – This is a rabid, blunt hardcore demo in the fine tradition, not too many frills but long enough to get into. Eight tunes on a cassette that reads "The program repeats so you don't even have to rewind. It's cool, you're lazy" — I like that! The architects of this racket are *MRR*-affiliates so I'm told, and this reminds me in places of DIE KREUZEN, straight forward with some cool almost DEEP WOUND style riffs. The stand-out to all this is really the articulate and pointed lyrics perfect for ensuring this kind of stuff is more memorable. I point to exhibit A "You used to be a womanising hedonistic tool, now you're lying blue-faced in a mess of your own stool" Although they're included, even my excellent 20/20 vision could just about make out the lyrics on the sheet. Arm yourself with a magnifying glass and get this for sure! (Bryony) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, $4ppd from: 91, Bennington St, SF, CA 94110)

PHANTOM – ".357-Roadhouse Nightmare" LA mailing address, packaged in a DVD case with a full color cover, and a business card inside, I was expecting the worst. It's not the awful rockabilly/sleazy bar rock hybrid I thought it would be, but it has that depressing bar punk vibe for sure. These guys play a sound that is pretty similar to that whole Long Beach STITCHES/SMOGTOWN thing from a few years back. Basic SoCal punk with vocals that really remind me of the SIMPLETONES for some reason. I'll go a head and invoke the name of old SOCIAL DISTORTION too while I'm at it, pretty decent SoCal punk just presented in a weird way that kind of turns me off. (Aaron) (7-song CD-R, lyrics included, c/o Nathan Mochizuki 1840 Winona Blvd #209, Los Angeles, CA 90027)

POLLUTION *120608* – Another tape I feel pretty stupid reviewing, because by the time you read this you will only be able to get it via rapidshare or sendspace. I really loved this band's last 12". It reminded me of the hardcore that got me into this, BORN AGAINST, RORSCHACH, that feeling of undisguised rage, combined with a particular atmosphere and heaviness that somehow isn't brute force macho boredom... This is a live tape, with studio BLACK FLAG and HONOR ROLE covers on the other side. The recording is fucking great, and this band is obviously one of the better hardcore bands around right now, the live stuff really reminded me of a heavier CULT RITUAL, in a way that nothing else I have heard by them has done. This obviously is not a bad thing, it was just sort of unexpected. The covers are a BLACK FLAG and HONOR ROLE song, later era FLAG, which brings out the inherant GINN obsession in the guitar sound... Anyway, this is band is fucking great, I can't wait to get their new LP. Really captures something of what makes them compelling–it's obvious why kids obssess over getting POLLUTION artifacts, unlike some of the other internet mysteries that cause mass fits of consumption. (Layla) (9-song tape, lyrics not included, Vinyl Rites, PO Box 924 Gainesville, FL 32602)

THE PREY – Dirty rock 'n' roll punk bands from San Diego have a special place in my heart and I really liked this CD. It collects material from three previous releases in '08 and '09 into a 14-song romp called *Primary News* with catchy chord progressions and rough-voiced and snotty lyrics about drinking, hating hipsters, and various other misanthropic themes. Lots of barroom backup vocals since everyone in the band gets a microphone. Kind of reminds me of the FUCK YOU UPS crossed with the DUKES OF HILLSBOROUGH. Drinking music. (Brad) (14-song CD-R, lyrics not included, www.theprey.net)

RATSTORM – First thing I have to mention is that the tape comes in a silk screened canvas pouch with studs on it, I guess so you can sport your very own Ratcharge patch. Another demo with very loud vocals, but it's bearable. This one reminds me of a more straightforward ANTISCHISM, it's got that semi metallic '90s crust sound with a real melodic almost poppy undercurrent and high pitched female vocals. Lyrics cover how shitty working is, personal empowerment, and all of the other topics that have been done to death. I would put more effort into the recording rather than the packaging next time. Nothing ground breaking, but fans of the aforementioned ANTISCHISM, and DETESTATION might dig it. (Aaron) (6-song CD-r/Tape, lyrics include, $5, 213 S. Clark St. Bloomington, IN)

RED ASPHALT – This is a collection of unreleased songs from the early SF synth punk band RED ASPHALT. Their 7" has a more SCREAMERS and PERE UBU (really!) feel compared to this CDR, it's more aggressive anyway in that SCREAMERS way. This was recorded in 1982, and features Bruno DeSmartass who went on to be in a post Will Shatter version of FLIPPER. The first few songs are tightly wound frantic male/female vocalled punk, then it slowly devolves into mutated weirdness that strikes me as being something like CATHOLIC DICIPLINE trying to play CONTORTIONS songs. Definitely from the Deaf Club art school side of early SF punk. It also sort of reminded me of the B52s, perhaps because of the way the male and female vocals interact and the tendency to sort of reconstruct B movie garage style rock'n'roll. Anyway, this is a pretty cool and great sounding document of a creative band and scene. It's a CD-R but it's packaged like a "proper" CD. (Layla) (12-song CD-R, lyrics included, $13 www.red-asphalt.com)

LUKE ROMANO – Woah, I should not be reviewing this kind of shit, I immediately want to pull a John Belushi from *Animal House* when I hear this kind of acoustic folk punk crap. What Luke is offering up here is four songs, with very, very naive lyrics about anarchism, the police etc, and vocals that are too earnest for their own good. Is this the kind of music Plan-it X puts out? I'm really hoping this is a young punk kid that got into a band like AGAINST ME, and is just starting to delve a little deeper, otherwise it's kind of embarrassing to listen to this. This is not punk, I don't care what he's singing about, this is the kind of shit some kid on Haight Street would be playing with his mangy ass dog sitting next to him. (Aaron) (4-song CD-R, no lyrics, freewebs.com/radicalrabbitdistro)

SAIRAUS – I have listened to this a billion times so far and I still don't really know how to describe it. Not because it's some off the wall, genre defying masterpiece but because it's really kind of nondescript. Their name is Finnish, but musically it's more of a straight forward metallic Japanese hardcore sound, the recording is kind of hurting and I think it's holding these songs back quite a bit. I could see them sounding way better live. This has envelope, what a pain in the ass. Also contains members of KONTRAATAQUE, CTHUWULF, PROGERIA and the infamous HATED PRINCIPLES. (Aaron) (7-song double CD-R, lyrics included, limited to 100, myspace.com/sairaus)

S.F.O.– Woah, cool all girl band from Chicago! S.F.O. reminds me of a less hardcore RED THREAD sorta raw with snarled out vocals and music that will remind you why you are a punk, ladies... At first I was reminded of a less joke-y RAOOUL, they have that frantic screaming rad female energy! But the lyrics are about being aware of getting trapped in violent relationships, gender roles, deconstructing borders, about U-Lock justice against SUV bullshit... I bet they get compared to Riot Grrrl bands, just because that's the only frame of reference punks sometimes have for female bands that aren't delicate flowers of gentle loving care. This to me is more raw basement punk power, there's a real fuck you energy to their sound. I would love to see 'em at a generator show or a back yard one too... The singer's voice is raw as fuck, someone here compared it to the woman

from the COMES! High praise. Pretty fucking rad. Chicago ladies representin' to the fullest as always. I love that they say they formed after Clit Fest, punk as fuck!! Hopefully they are gonna play the PDX Clit Fest in August. (Layla) (6-song tape, lyrics included, SFOchicago@gmail.com, PO Box 830 Chicao, IL 60690)

SHOPPERS – "You shot me and I woke up in my next life" I didn't order this demo, yet it appeared with a delightful note thanking me for doing so, and was somehow sent to me personally at a temporary address I hadn't made public in a country I don't live in. These serendipitous, nonsensical yet pleasing twists and turns are reflected in the nature of the sounds on this three song cassette, a release on Drugged Conscience, that consistently high-quality and interesting tape label. SHOPPERS share both former traits with their chosen label but are actually from Syracuse, and really quite captivating. Said sound, on first few listens, recalls a kind of fuzzed out nineties dare I say it "emo" vibe, on the twinklier end of the spectrum—maybe if FISTICUFFS BLUFF were a bit more ponderous and less frantic? It has that warm and nostalgic-for-a-time-before-your-time feel that I dig hard. There's some Kinsella/Mascis style guitarisms in here too, no bad thing, although I prefer the faster songs. It's pretty catchy too—sparky slightly distorted female vocals low in mix but high in pitch, with unusual lyrics. In short, this shit is my jam, man...Oh, and turns out a friend is a longtime penpal of the singer and ordered this on my behalf, so mystery solved for now, but I can't wait to hear more from these ladies! (Bryony) (3-song cassette, lyrics included, 1003 E Fayette Street Apt 5, Syracuse NY, 13210, www.druggedconscience.com)

SICK FUCK – The overused Gustave Dore art on the cover mad me think this would be something in the rust or metal vein, but I was damned wrong. This is rock-influenced mid-paced modern hardcore, and a lot better than most bands I'd use those words to describe. It'll probably sound insulting, but this reminds me of a not-as-good version of early FUCKED UP. Given that FUCKED UP's early EPs and first full length are some of the best hardcore produced this millennium, that's less damning with faint praise and more praising with faint damnation. I would definitely check out more of their material. This pro-tape is numbered out of 48, so if you want one be quick about it. (xYosefx) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, Mike Buscemi, 578 Carolina Ave., Brick, NJ 08724, mbuscemi@gmail.com, sickfucknj.blogspot.com, myspace.com/helloimscreaming)

SLAVE SCENE – Sick flayed Florida hardcore, total mutilation sound, like a headache or a practice tape for ritualistic heathens. I am sure, you are sure that you can't get this tape anymore. I shoulda reviewed it when they sent it to me, but I didn't. But thanks to the internet there are several places you can download this for your computer listening pleasure if you are able to use internet search tools in an adequate fashion. As for the music. It seems to have more constructive tendencies when compared to their first tape, which I know got a tepid review from another reviewer in these pages when it was reissued on vinyl. Though, I liked the total ridiculousness of it all, something about it felt teenage and disgusted. New sounds should annoy "grown ups." Make something that the gramdparents of the scene will want to not only throw out but also dismiss offhand in disgust. It's your right. I love hardcore, and I like it when people fuck with it, try out something that isn't just a pantomime of some Mystic records past. This isn't that, but what is it? No power electronics, no JARBOE tributes, is it it's own thing? I don't think so. But what is. (Layla) (5-song tape, no lyrics, cultmaternal.blogspot.com)

SOPORS – Dirgey and somewhat plodding, this is inoffensive Plan-it-X records-alike folk punk given the full band treatment, with a kind of chewed-up tape production aesthetic which is quite interesting. Comes with a cool insert and if you like nice ditties about "sitting deflated, tongue tied in the dark" this could be your hit of the summer. (Bryony) ($2, 8-song cassette, 1608 Prince St, Berkeley 94703 USA)

SPOOKTOBER – Pretty uninteresting pop stuff with a drum machine. The vocals are extremely whiny, I guess it reminds me of ATOM + HIS PACKAGE, or the one time I was at a party that JAPANTHER played (don't ask). The lyrics are mostly ghost related, my assumption is that they are meant to be humorous. They aren't. I don't see what this has to do with punk, or this magazine. It's self-indulgent bullshit for well adjusted college students. (Aaron) ($5 10-song CD-R, lyrics included, PO 29 Athens OH 45701)

STAB YOUR BACK – Any punk who has lived in the central coast area of California has a good idea of what this band sounds like. A more in your face version of the So-Cal poppy skater punk sound, it took me right back to bloody nose shows in rental halls 13 years ago. Fast, aggro, and pissed off lyrics, the band sounds like it has a greater appreciation of classic hardcore than all the whoa-whoa bro bands that you get in the So-Cal scene. They're more wrong-side-of-the-tracks or someone grew up in Lompoc. I have some little miscreant cousins that would absolutely love this band. (Brad) (6-song CD-R, lyrics included, $5 ppd. Damien Robertson, PO Box 952, Grover Beach, CA 93483 www.stabyourback.com)

TERMINAL GIRLS – Bugged out Michigan synth-garage punk, it's obviously indebted to the synth punk forefathers and mothers of yore, but this is probably more from a post LOST SOUNDS world?? Their songs are catchy and it's refreshing to listen to something like this rather than wimpy cuddle core teddy bear music that is going under the guise of garage nowadays. The recording is somehow lo fi and warm, it gives it a bedroom feel but everything sounds like it could have been recorded in 1982 or now as well... It's not that GARY NUMAN computer drone cold world synth sound, they definitely are coming at it with a punk rock sensibility rather than a new waver's dystopian SciFi distance. The last song was kind of a grim ballad, it just seemed dull and whiny, but the rest of this is definitely worth investigation. (Layla) (4-song CD-R, lyrics included, Terminalgirls@gmail.com, 21620 St Clair Shores, MI 48082)

TRANSGRESSION – I'm wondering if this is missing the lyrics sheet, because this copy didn't come with one but from what I can make out this is exactly the kind of hardcore you're supposed to read the lyrics to as you listen. Oh, did I mention that this is fucking great? Fast and heavy crustcore with dual vocals—one of the vocalists' voice is higher-pitched and strained in a '90s screamo sort of way, the other is lower and gruff, and they work well together. Unfortunately this was either recorded, mixed or dubbed in a fucked up way, because one of the channels keeps cutting in and out on this tape. Bummer. I'd definitely like to hear what they can do with a halfway-decent production. (xYosefx) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, myspace.com/transgressiondc)

WARBONER *Noise Coffin* — Between the name, and the super shitty recording, I can't tell if this is a joke or not. The note they included said they worked hard on it so I guess it's serious. Musically it has a fast crusty sound similar to DROPDEAD. For the most part the vocals are insanely high pitched, kind of like the one's that PLUTOCRACY and NO LESS used occasionally. Of course they used them rather sparingly and WARBONER uses them almost nonstop. If this had a more beefed up guitar sound, it would probably be a little bit better, but those vocals are seriously unbearable. (Aaron) (10-song CD-R, warboner@gmail.com)

WHITE PAGES – Some neat garagey punk tunes, kinda lo-fi and blown-out which lends it a pleasingly urgent quality, however in the faster songs its ventures into "Is this at the wrong speed?" territory, although obviously it's a tape, so yeah... The songs sound jangly, off beat and raw. Neat. One or two of them even have a slightly '90s emo at hyper-speed style at least in the vocal delivery (or maybe it's my life's penance to hear SHOTMAKER in everything, oops). There's a KILLJOYS cover on here though, you should definitely be able to get down with that. (Bryony) (5-song cassette, whitepageswhitepages@gmail.com)

WURM TONGUE –OK, so this doesn't have the best sound quality—fuck it, it's a demo, right? The tape hiss does obscure the music a bit, or maybe it just distracts me, but underneath it all this is actually pretty damn good. Fast fucking hardcore, with some thrashy parts, some slower bits here and there, lots of nifty guitar work and songs you can tell apart from each other. The singer really sounds like he's digging it all out from deep inside, rather than just trying to sound like his favorite band's frontman.I'll bet these guys slay live, if you're ever in Boston see if they're playing a show. (xYosefx) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, 7 Norman Ave., Newburgsport, MA 01951, xgetxthrashedx@hotmail.com, myspace.com/wurmtongue)

V/A – TICK TOCK RECORDS MIXTAPE – This is effectively a sampler for Tick Tock Records, a label out of Brooklyn, and functions as their tenth release. The bands on here are as follows: CHARLIE MCALISTER, THANK GOD, APESHIT, MOTORMOUTH MABEL, KEVIN E. TAYLOR, SWEET TOOTH NELSON, BEAUTY APES, TEENAGE NIGHT WAR, BIG + TALL, THE JADEWALKERS, CHRIS THOMAS, SMALL POX, JEFF RIDDLE, and WHITE BOY CRAZY. Covering the full gamut of loud 'n' fast punk rock, I'd say the best one was probably THANK GOD's chaotic harsh stylings, a little digging reveals this is members of GUYANA PUNCH LINE, which shows. You probably know if you want this, but this mixtape has sold out twice and the website informs me that a third pressing will be your last chance, so if you are into any of these bands then get on it. (Bryony) (14-song cassette, www.ticktockrecords.com, 64 4th Apt. IR / Brooklyn NY / 11231

ZINES

Send zines for review to: MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please include the following info on a separate piece of paper with your zine: postpaid price, international price, do you take trades?, size, copied or printed?, number of pages, language, mailing address, website address, email address.

Reviews by:
(DA) Diane Anastasio
(BP) Bryony Beynon
(JD) Judy Balmin
(MB) Mariam Bastani
(JB) Julia Booze
(TB) Tim Brooks
(LG) Layla Gibbon
(BG) Bob Goldie
(MM) Marissa Magic
(JM) Jeff Mason
(CR) Casey Ress
(DS) Dionne Stevens
(VX) XYosefX

ABORT #22 / $3, free to prisoners
5.5 x 8 – copied – 60 pgs
Fiction! In general, I'm against it. In some of Jonathan's work here, he makes good use of run-on sentences and captures the foulness of modern life. Other times, or even at the same time, he can devote pages to *descriptions* of things, which serves no purpose except for the writing itself to be admired. To me this seems like going on about nothing. The stories tend to feature relationships that are not fulfilling. If this is your jam, it's on right here. Also included: artwork, and a yellowish crust of some kind smeared on the cover. (JM)
Jonathan Spies / 45 E 7th St. #106 / New York, NY 10003

BROKE A$$ #1 + 2 / $2, $3 international, trades preferred
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 28 pgs
Maybe these aren't the greatest zines ever, but they are punk as fuck. 1.) A column called "Minimum Wage, Maximum Rage." What more do you need? 2.) Ridiculous, (sometimes) hilarious comics, photocopied "B-list food mascots," grainy photos of punk shows and the inside of the chip truck, show reviews and trivial anecdotes, a focus on being wasted and making questionable decisions. 3.) A catchy slogan, "Obsessive Compulsive Excessive Repulsive." 4.) Regional style, the region in question having terrible weather and economic climate (Newfoundland, on the East Coast of the socialist paradise, Canada.) I consider myself fortunate to have gained this insight into the mind and life of Steve Dejected, who does not want his postal address in *MRR* 'cuz he is afraid people will use Google maps to look in his window. (JM)
towerofswine@hotmail.com

CHAINBREAKER #5 / $3
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 42 pgs
Woah, mega heavy zine about death. I guess this is usually about bikes but the lady that writes it has been running into a lot of death around her as of late; these are all the stories of them. It's straight forward and intense, 40 pages of just text, definitely cathartic but pretty draining. (MM)
Shelly / 3206 Toulouse / New Orleans, LA 70119

DISTORT #28 / $?
8.27 x 11.69 – printed – 18pgs
Another month, another exemplary punk product from ultra luminary turbo scribe (and *MRR* columneer) DX. Such is the rabid intensity of reader love for *Distort* that when organizing the distribution for subscribers in the nasty island above Europe, I'm frequently on the receiving end of emails just begging for an ETA on their touch of that dirty, dirty xerox. Issue 28 was particularly exciting, marking as it did a renewed focus towards sides of hardcore that I'm particularly fond of. I get a buzz out of Meanstreak and Brotherhood being mentioned in the same pages as Electric Eels and Devo, with the same level of seriousness, context-led examination, and obvious passion. It's a bit like DX has a helicopter or some stratospheric contraption that enables him to hover over the entire history of international weirdo music and other forms of outsider media, as well as all related political and social issues that informed the creation of said media, swooping down to examine specific things in granular, grandiose and genuine detail. This issue, said 'copter zooms in on illuminating chats with Lou Barlow, Born Bad, Scarcity of Tanks, Criminal Damage, Video Disease, No Tolerance and Rival Mob. Some of them were laugh out loud funny, some surprising, but all of them taught me something new about the interviewees and none of them dragged. There are lessons in here for everyone in how to conduct interviews, particularly fledgling zine-writers, this is a place I definitely look to improve my steez. No filler. The flipside of this is that, as distribution has improved, the influence of *Distort* can been seen increasingly in hundreds of just-starting-out fanzines across the world, and while this is in principle no bad thing, wholesale aping can be a sorry state to behold. Whether the editor is conscious of this I don't know, but a few stylistic switch-ups in the latest issue keep everyone on their toes. Get a subscription. (BP)

DX / PO BOX 239 / North Carlton / VIC 3054 / Australia
distorttheworld@gmail.com

DON'T TREAD ON ME #40 / $1 or trade
5.5 x 8 – copied – 23 pages
Though this zine is pretty hilarious, I'm finding it hard to believe that there have been 39 issues prior to this one. The stapling is awkward and it's kind of ugly in general. It has a masthead for some unknowable reason. But regardless, I'm all in favor of "Drunken Letters to Abstract Concepts" section. I don't know if they have actually done it before, but this issue's concept is "14th Century French Agriculture." I advise that you skip this issue if you're going to get pissed off about the writer getting way too into accusing "14th Century French Agriculture" of being retarded. I also like the section that outs Oscar the Grouch and other popular figures as punks and explains why. Everything is very silly. The record review is probably the most boring part because it's moderately conventional. (JD)
1128 West Grace St. Apt. 2 / Richmond, VA 23220
ratso27@gmail.com

EARTH FIRST! May/June /$4.50
14x10 – newsprint – 32 pgs
An extra thick edition of the radical environmental activist broadsheet. It's difficult to read without feeling incredibly enraged or despondent, endless open mountain coal mining, and yet more threats to ancient redwoods until infinity... There is an incredibly inspiring interview with a militant feminist punk (she was an extra in *Ladies and Gentlemen the Fabulous Stains!)* who

as a teenage anarchist with the Wimmin's Fire Brigade used explosives to further anti-colonial, ecological and feminist struggles in the early '80s. She spent twenty years in prison as a result, and now does work supporting women in prison. It was fascinating reading; I hope she writes a book. Definitely worth picking up for that interview alone, but the rest of the articles were also generally compelling. I found the pieces that seemed to mostly be detailed accounts of infighting within the organization not that interesting, but if you are involved in the movement that probably wouldn't be the case. (LG)
PO BOX 3023 / Tucson, AZ 85702
collective@earthfirstjournal.org

FORTUNE #2 / Free
4.5 x 8.5 – copied – 12 pages
This person has developed a bold new technique for stapling their zine together. It's not a good one, but bad binding can have its own charm. Other aspects of the design of the book are also mysterious, like the pages getting trimmed down unevenly to 4.5 inches from the standard 5.5. The whole thing is hand written on lined paper with barely any interruptions for drawings or pictures. There's one winter formal-esque picture, one pasted horoscope, and one typed-up footnote. This issue is a single story about this fellow's visit to Olympia, WA to hang out with people and play a show, with the twist that this person is very awkward and weird about everything and trying to not get wasted and do something horrible all the time. An unusually large amount of water drinking ensues. It culminates in the author reading his high school notebook to a crowd of people at the Voyeur (he tells them he just found the notebook at the bar) and him feeling temporarily triumphant about it. It's not totally clear why he would want to do that performance or why he would then write about it, but that's definitely part of this guy's game. (JD)
Dean Patrick / 1273 Glass Ave NE / Olympia, WA 98506

HENRY & GLENN FOREVER / $4
5 x 5 – printed – 60 pgs
I had heard about this comic zine and being a lover of comics, I was totally stoked to get this when it was passed up by another reviewer (sucker...). There are four different artists illustrating this comic zine who make up the Igloo Tornado Art collective. This collection of one-panel comics is centered on two "fictional" characters named Henry and Glenn that look suspiciously like Henry Rollins and Glenn Danzig. They are "roommates" who have two Satanist neighbors named Daryl and John who look suspiciously like Hall and Oates. My description does not do the comic justice, cuz most everything in it is fucking hilarious. The bigger the fan of each of these guys you are, the bigger the laugh. I have to admit, that the thought of this combination is sorta hot. The two manliest dudes in punk history together at last. I would love to be in that sandwich... Each page was not only entertaining, but also an exercise in assessing what degree of an ass kicking each artist is going to get from both Glenn and Henry. My guess is that their drawing days would be over... There is one artist in particular that had me laughing damn hard. If you know the lyrics to Last Caress, then you will get one of his/her funniest jokes. (MB)
www. microcosmpublishing.com

HOW CAN LIMO KID KILL YOUR DREAMS?
#4 / $?
5.5 x 8.5 – printed – 130 pgs
This Czech language zine reports hardcore happenings in its immediate area, as well as neighboring Baltic scenes like Croatia, methinks. There are interviews with XbanaX, Banaj, and Propaghandi in this issue, and loads more. I hadn't thought much about Propaghandi in a while, but someone obviously still cares. What I found more interesting was a feature that seems to demystify the symbols often used in nationally specific gang tattoos, like Russian, Aryan, and Latin cartels. I was instantly reminded of Vigo's butt in that nekkid sauna fight in Eastern Promises upon glancing some of the detailed renderings illustrating the piece. I want so badly to read it, but cannot, and that seems like a shame because there is so much text in this fanzine, plus reviews and badass photos. I like the pictures, what can I say. (DS)
Jan Kloucek / Poste Restante / Dolany u Olomouce 78316 / Europe / Czech Republic

JUST LIKE CARIBOO August 2009 / contact them for price
5.75 x 8.25 – copied – 16 pgs
I liked the intro quite a bit, even though it's barely a paragraph relating to his favorite Pixies song. "This zine is like the wood, where I can hide from the whole world and do anything I want." Interviewed are calm indie stylists Lemuria (Buffalo, NY, US), Baltic gore-grinders Karma Jawless (Vilnius, Lithuania) and the keyboard-friendly powerpop band Silards (Riga, Latvia) that I thought was an intriguing combination. The interviews are pretty good. There are also a few stories, one from a guy who has a cyst on his kidney, yet remains positive, and another one I could barely make sense out of. (My Russian is 100x worse than this person's English.) The back cover is a trashy comic that I found to be creepy and misogynist, but maybe is intended as a critique of creepy misogynists? When I opened the envelope, a giant pile of little flyers, etc. fell out, including a 3" CD that my machine wouldn't play. On the whole I think this installment is a positive contribution to zine culture, in part because I try to be supportive of zines from lesser-known scenes such as Samarskaya Oblast. (JM)
Zakharov Sergey Sergeeich /
ul. Z. Komodemianskoy / 12-119 / Samara / Samarskaya Oblast / Russia / 443122 /
justlikecariboo@gmail.com

MIDDLE FINGER RESPONSE #2 / 1.5 or 2 Euro ppd, trades
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 80 pgs
This is the second installment of this Spanish language zine from Madrid Spain that has a similar format to our very own magazine. The columns are interesting with my favorites being Maiaprou Kouskaya discussing punk radio and a list of come cool shows going on now, Monica reflecting on feminism and its effect and reception in today's world, and JCDM discussing older punks from a younger punks perspective. Pues, chamaco, le diré que nunca siento como un punk viejo, pero somos muchos, jajaja! There are interviews with Active Minds, Oi Polloi, Punto de Fuga, the artist Luissendón and more. There is the wonderful recipe section focusing on culinary creations using beer, an interesting historical article about sexuality and eroticism in the West that is somewhat thorough, with a wealth of basic information for the length that it is, with cited sources for further investigation. There is also an article on fear and social control and a section I admire a ton that features a political event that some in activist culture may know already, but might be forgotten or overlooked by others. This issue focuses on events and after effects of November of 2008 in Tarnac, France. There are reviews of zines, records and books. The hit of this issue is their new section introducing new bands, giving a short list of facts and where to find them. This zine is a good read and is packed full of interesting stuff. If you are a Spanish speaker, this is a good one! (MB)
proukouskaya@gmail.com

MODERN HATE VIBE #4 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 42 pgs
Bryony is currently doing a column for *Maximum*, so perhaps I am biased. This is an entirely separate endeavor that she does between everything else she works at, like singing and traveling in punk band The Sceptres. *MHV* this time around is a totally non-boring US tour with Shitty Limits and Logic Problem, and she also talks with some other bands along the way – No Talk and Foreign Objects. As a writer, she is far better than I, so I dare not go on and on. Let's just say I recommend this zine to all you voyeur types and stay-at-home-moms as well as those of you who just like to read musings from a smart young lady punk from the sunny UK. (DS)
Bryony B / 12 Richmond Avenue / London / N1 0NF
www.sceptredyouth.co.uk /
bryonybeynon@gmail.com

OUTRAGE #8 / $?
11.5 x 8.2 – copied – 24 pgs
My French is a shadow of what it formerly was, so bear with me here (this zine is entirely in French) as while I did get an A grade at A-level, I was 17 so I just talked about how my favorite band was Les Get Up Kids. This is a meaty zine out of the city of Lyon, which is in the South of

France, and it focuses on radical politics from the perspective of current affairs in France, so as with most of European left-leaning media the effects of the recession in highlighting the fundamental injustices already inherent in global capitalism are central. Swine flu (this came out in November 2009 at the height of the hysteria) and the politics of profiting from the distribution of the vaccine is the focus of some of the articles in here. The cover states this zine is free in the area of Lyon and surrounds but there may even be a PDF available for international readers. Articles are mainly news-based but the feature on the ramifications of the anti-terrorist legislation (SDAT) was a good read — there's a crossword and word search in the back too! No anarcho-sudoku though. A good acquisition for anyone interested in the politics of resistance in France. (BP)
Outrage@riseup.net

PINS & NEEDLES / $?
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 16 pgs
Basically an entire zine of writings about the inner thoughts of a bitter cynic. If you can get past the name-dropping of embarrassing bands (Tool anyone?) it's a pretty good read. I even chuckled a couple times. Rants on everything from drunkenly believing a band is blowing your mind to Chihuahuas to twitter. Decent writing. Decent times. (MM)
pinsandneedleszine@gmail.com

PLASTIC BOMB #71 / 3.5 Euro in Germany, 3.7 outside
7.75 x 11.75 – printed – 80 pgs—German
"Packed" is the first thing that comes to mind. Ads, interviews, reviews, articles ("Christian bashing Reloaded Part I" seems to refer to the rotten religion of Catholicism, another is about National Socialism 1933-45), a CD comp... My German is insufficient to even tell if the Freeze interview has many stories about the singer being totally spun on meth. I know, what Freeze interview doesn't? I do not believe *Plastic Bomb* can be stopped. (JM)
Postfach 100205 / D-47002 Duisburg / Germany
www.plastic-bomb.de

RAZORCAKE #56 / $4
8.5 x 11 – printed – 112 pages
Most people probably picked up this issue for the interview with Billy Bragg but I'm one of the few punks in the world who isn't all over that dude's nuts so I flipped immediately to the story on Thee Undertakers an old LA band that nobody has heard of but you should listen to. Somehow J Wang from Dan Padilla seems to make it into every issue of Razorcake and he's there again in the interview about Dude Jams that totally sold me on checking that band out. (BL)
PO Box 42129 / Los Angeles, Ca 90042

RIDE THE SNAKE #3 / $?
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 48 pgs
This zine seems to be the product of the label of the same name (Ride the Snake, that is) from Boston, MA, and collects snippets, stories, top tens, suggestions, lists and even some strange motivational writing from, again from what I can gather, the label's main actors and their buds. Good music writing, also interesting in that meta-zine way where it seems to be very based on internet conversations, like one sorta column is basically a reprint of some blog entries, and the intro notes how far they've come from an idea expressed over g-Chat, (which immediately reminded me of the writing of Tao Lin, if you're into post-internet literature, but that's a tangent and a half.) I guess it's better to recognize the influence of the ubiquitous "network" than exist in some weird luddite ghetto, but this zine could make much more of what is actually really great writing content with a visual rethink (i.e. more pictures!) to catapult it higher up the pick-up-and-love list – its just hard to get through in reams of unillustrated washed out Arial, yuh-know? I'm especially into Jesse Staniforth's piece about an infamous punk house called "Gates of Hell" that makes it worth ordering something from the label just to get a hold of this article. Well-elucidated observations on crusty lifestyle politics and the status of the punk house as a contact zone for radical politics, or not — "The fashion and décor [of the punk house] are in line with Discharge's view of the world — a monochrome apocalyptic nihilism that assumes either capitalism or nuclear war is going to destroy humanity very shortly, and there's nothing to be done except get wasted and live in filth, listening to music reminding one of the necessity of doing so by underlining the inevitability of the coming end." Trip out on that. (BP)
RTS / 6 Wadleigh Pl, Boston, MA 02127

SEVEN INCHES TO FREEDOM #8 / $1
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 48 pgs
Stoked to happen upon this punker tome again, and having just spent a good fifteen minutes working out the difference between UK and US paper sizes (it did involve some metal ruler violence) allow me to confirm, this one is indeed proof that Americans can rock the half size zine with impunity. For the uninitiated, *Seven Inches to Freedom* is a hardcore punk fanzine from Florida that's heavy on toner and thinking. It's all wrapped up in an enticing aesthetic that is personally exactly how I wish every zine looked; strongly reminiscent of the Steak Mtn/Reversal of Man/Combat Wounded Veteran style distorted fonts and halftone deal. Could be a Florida thing, either way my eyes say "Yes!" Content wise, it's a bit like tucking into a round of xerox sarnies as there is much to digest here, the editor Joe Lachut has corralled a good selection of more than ten contributors and columnists to muse on wide subjects like "Death of the Music Industry" and "Zines vs. Blogs" but done in a refreshingly well-thought-out and stoical way that doesn't resort to the same old clichés, but instead presents the arguments via a series of neat interviews with "bloggers" (did I just say that? Wretch... although Joe craftily avoids the term, kudos) and zine authors. Particular highlight was a piece on punk crux par excellence "The Politics of Becoming Jaded." I haven't even mentioned the pieces on bands like GOB, Rupture and Deathrats (who I definitely want to check out after reading that interview.) So yeah, being foreign I'd call it 'A5', but you can call it awesome. I want all of these. (BP)
Joe Lachut / SITF ZINE / PO BOX 457 / FT. MYERS FL 33902-0457 / wtfhttapes.com

SHORT FAST & LOUD #23 / $6.66 ppd US, $11.50 ppd world
7 x 7 – printed – 80 pgs
First things first: the reason for the seemingly high price on this zine is because it includes a copy of the Capitalist Casualties / Lack of Interest split 7", which is only available with the zine. Check the record reviews section for that, as it's not covered here. Now that that's out of the way, let's move on to the zine itself. *Short Fast and Loud* should be a familiar name to *MRR* readers, having been around for over a decade at this point. While the zine was originally run by Chris Dodge and distributed through his label Slap A Ham Records, Jeff and Athena of Six Weeks Records took over the reins some years back in a pretty seamless transition. As the name (and pedigree) would imply, the focus is mostly on powerviolence, grind, thrash and fast hardcore, although they do cover some metal, noise and doom/sludge from time to time. This issue features interviews with Texas grind/powerviolence kings P.L.F., Idaho fastcore heroes Hummingbird of Death and Japanese grind freaks Damage Digital. Regular features include the "Mosh of Ass" demo review section, "Gimme 5" (this installment features contributors' five favorite splits) and the usual columns and record reviews. This is a mandatory read as always, and the split 7" between two of the greatest California hardcore bands of all time only makes it even more so. Buy or die, fuckers. (VX)
Six Weeks Records / sixweeksrecords.com

SILBER MEDIA ZINES: XO #6, WORMS #6, JUST A MAN #4, MARKED #2, COPS & CROOKS #1, MECHA #1, SILBER MINI-COMICS SAMPLER #1 / $1 each
Various sizes – Copied – Various page numbers
This collection of mini zines vary from 1.75 x 2 and 1.75 x 2.25, with the biggest being 2.75 x 2.75. The page counts varies 20 to 36 pages each. The idea of having a story in my pocket is awesome, but these comics definitely have the power to reach tons of people. The length is short enough to capture the shortest, weed damaged, video gaming attention span, yet interesting enough to maintain the attention of comic book readers. The length definitely leaves me wanting more and I feel like these are comics that should be passed on, much like Chick Tracts, without the religious aspect, of course,

leaving them where they can be picked up and enjoyed by a stranger. The comics that belong to an on going series have a brief explanation of when happened in the last issue. They are all well done with different artists illustrating one author, Brian John Mitchell. The stand out artists are Johnny Hoang, with his ability to translate so much action, detail and great use of light and dark that corresponds with the story, and Andrew White, with his use of this tiny format in a minimalist way, and his use of light /dark and aspect fitting the western storyline well. Worms is an interesting story about a girl who becomes the host to alien worms after she is subject to medical experiments. There is a lot of room here to explore interesting themes about women and body. Hopefully the author and the female illustrator can collaborate and turn out something that will delve into those themes. The best mini comic of this collection is *Cops & Crooks*. It is two stories in one showing two very different sides of the law. One is of the cop killer who is avenging his father who was slain by a cop. His mission is to bring down the system, one cop at a time. The other side is of a guy who followed in the footsteps of his father, becoming a cop, after his father was killed of the job. Both stories pull you in conflicting directions eliciting emotional response to the already complex relationship between the public and the law. Good stuff!
Silber Media / PO Box 18062 / Raleigh, NC / 27619 / www.silbermedia.com/comics

SMILE HON YOUR IN BALTIMORE presents **WASTE /** $?
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 68 pgs
The editor dropped a pretty big hint at this issue's theme with a solid one-word title on the coffee-stained cover—*Waste*. It was an exciting thing to find in my box. Short poop stories, one about pee and then more poop filled pages—it got old, butt didn't stink. (DS)
William P Tandy c/o Eight Stone Press / PO Box 11064 / Baltimore, MD 21212

SO NAILS #4 / Trade/Stamps
8.5x7 – copied – 20 pgs
This is a great zine outta Hawaii that is more personal than most music zines I've been getting recently, but is in no way a per-zine, just has personality I guess. (Did I just say that? Urg). "It's hard trying to make your home in a 'vacation spot.' The focus of the culture and economy is tourists. You almost feel like a second-class citizen to the visitors that come here. Most of the work on the island is based on serving the visiting population, which can be degrading... Nothing here is really your own, it's all here for the sake of visitors. It's easy to feel disconnected." How's that for a first paragraph? This is an incredibly well written zine, with articles on Hawaiian punk Lance Hahn (RIP), the artists Feeding who do a lot of Iron Lung records art, and a piece on frustration about the fact that no DIY bands ever play Hawaii... This really great zine does exactly what a local music zine should do, covers what's happening in Hawaii with enough history to give some perspective on the current state of things... I would recommend the Flying Fuckin' Aheads to the author—total weirdo Flipper style mutant rock from Hawaii in thee early '80s. You should send off for this zine, it's free! And if you are in a band, tour Hawaii! There are also cool pictures of Bikini Kill playing there in the '90s...(LG)
Corby Plumb / 2531 Kapiolani Blvd Apt % / Honolulu, HI 96826
brainsandhands@yahoo.com

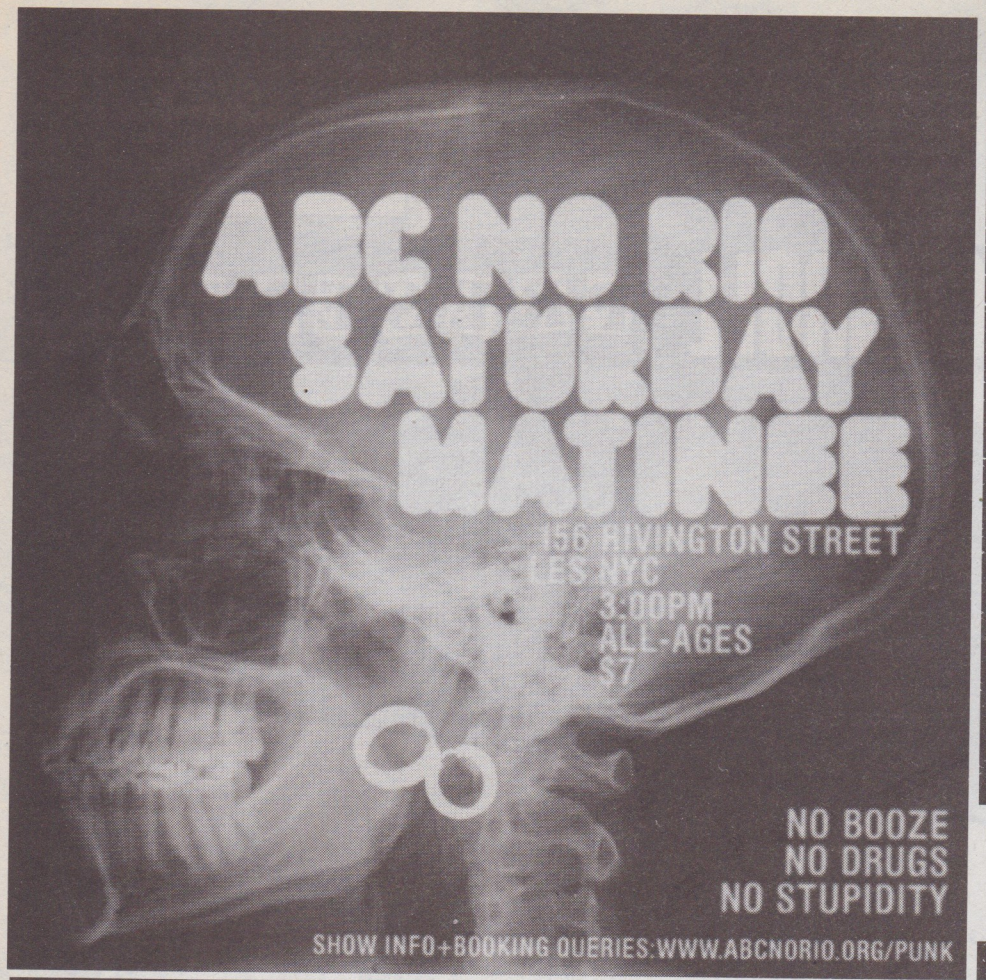
THE TROUBLE WITH NORMAL #100 / $2.00 ppd US
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 56 pgs
Damn, one hundred issues? Really? Crazy, whodathunkit? *The Trouble With Normal* is, quite frankly, a zine that holds no interest to me. The layout is fairly non-existent, the band logos taken from the internet are pixilated as hell, and some of the text on the cover ended up being printed over one of the photos, making it illegible. They also use a stencil font for the headers, but it doesn't include characters for punctuation, so there are boxes where the periods and such should be throughout. Still, there's a certain charm to the DIY not-giving-a-fuck-ness of it all. This has interviews with Chain and the Gang and Big Medicine, two bands I've never heard of and will never listen to, a bunch of gig and record reviews and some "political" writings. If that sounds like your thing, go for it. (VX)
PO Box 1444 / Columbia, MO / 65205-1444 / thetroublewithnormalzine@gmail.com

TRUST #141/02 / 2.50 Euros plus postage
8.24 x 11.625 – printed – 68 pgs
Can you read German? I don't, so I can't read a damn word of this, but I do know that *Trust* is a very long-running German zine devoted to hardcore, punk and underground music. I can also tell you that this issue features interviews with Jello Biafra, Steve Ignorant (of Crass, Schwartzeneggar, The Stratford Mercenaries and Current 93), Burning Love (the new Band from Chris Colohan of Cursed/Left For Dead), Isis, Brujera, Murder Disco X and Hysteric. It's nicely printed on glossy black paper with photos throughout, and it has some columns, band news, tour dates and lots of reviews. If that sounds interesting to you, and if *Sie sprechen Deutsches*, then you probably already subscribe. (VX)
TRUST-Fanzine / Postach 11 07 62 / 28087 Bremen / Germany

VEGGIE DOG SATURN #4 / $4ppd
8.5 x 5.5 – copied- 28 pgs
I like comics but am often under-whelmed by the ones that come in for review at *MRR*. Often they are intentionally obtuse or self-important. Occasionally I find one that I actually like and *Veggie Dog Saturn* falls into that narrow category. It has a simple presentation not unlike early *Optic Nerve*, where Jason tells stories from his youth or more recent past and uses them as a vehicle for exploring such diverse issues as pooping in the bath tub, racial insensitivity and toys functioning as currency. The writing and art are clever while the insights are interesting and well demonstrated. Simple but really pretty great. (CR)
Buyer Beware Comics / PO Box 20083 / Dayton, OH 45420
www.buyerbeware.guttertrash.net

VOICE OF A GENERATION #3 / $?
7.75 x 11.75 – copied - 20 pgs (+ 7")
I was real surprised by the strange-to-my-mind ideas espoused herein. "I'm not into hardcore. I never was. I'm into Bold." This was said on the way to (wait for it) a Bold reunion show in (one guess) Europe which, (can you believe) even these kids thought sucked. So *Voice Of A Generation* here means kids informed by a particular period of hardcore. There are plenty of photos, which look great in the huge format. About half of them are "Hardcore Before You Were Born," which is kind of funny as I figure people identifying with the editors were at least out of diapers when the shots were taken. There's an interview with the more-recently-defunct band Abusive Action, who have a good attitude about younger kids, "lots of fresh blood, that's cool man." (The zine comes with a 7" of theirs with unreleased songs, reviewed a few pages back.) The newer Dutch bands (mostly from the last ten years) whose photos appear are straight edge, as were Abusive Action. Following this is an article on the famous skater Jay Adams, who couldn't be interviewed 'cuz he's in jail for drugs again, but the piece talks about how inspiring his life and work is. There are fifteen reviews—four books, three new music releases, and eight reissues. What I like about this zine is how fully they are realizing their own vision. They wanted a something with great photos, not much writing considering the space available, and no filler. (JM)
Peter Hoeren / Von-der-Mark-Str. 31 / 47137 Duisburg / Germany /
voag@crucialresponse.com

XXX PANDA #3 / $1
2.75 x 4.25 – printed – 1 page folded
Kooky kind of comic 'zine. The entire text reads: Somedays, people wonder why I'm bitchy, it's not PMS, it's that (image of panda vagina), it itches, scritch, scritch (image of panda scratching it's vagina). Such 'zines aren't for everyone but I got a kick out of it. Art is hand drawn and text is done with a labeler. The next time I go to a friend's parents' house I'm going to leave this 'zine under their mom's pillow. (BL)
Kate Howell klhaaart@yahoo.com



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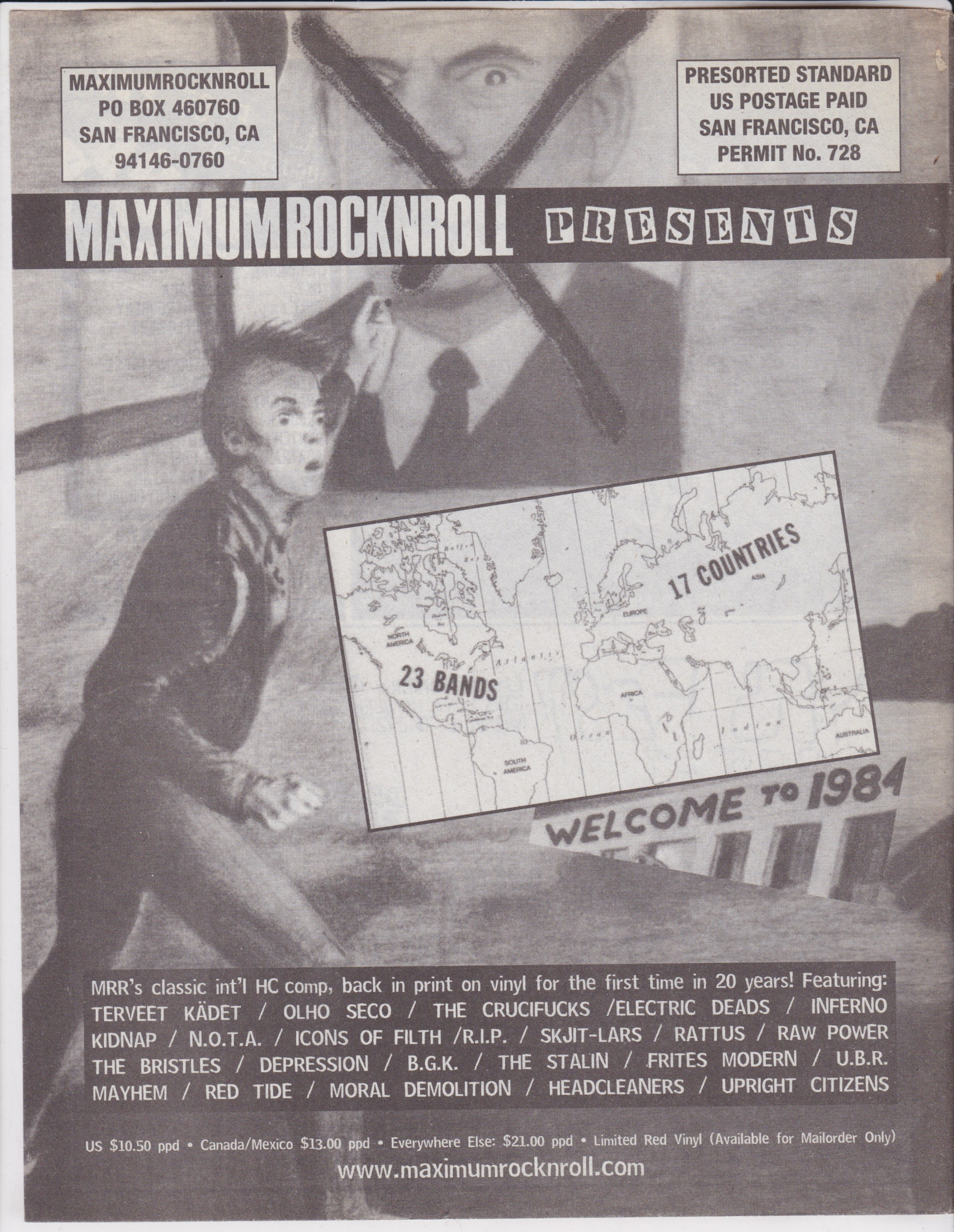

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